

**EDWARD A. TENNEY**

# **THE HIGHWAY JUNGLE**

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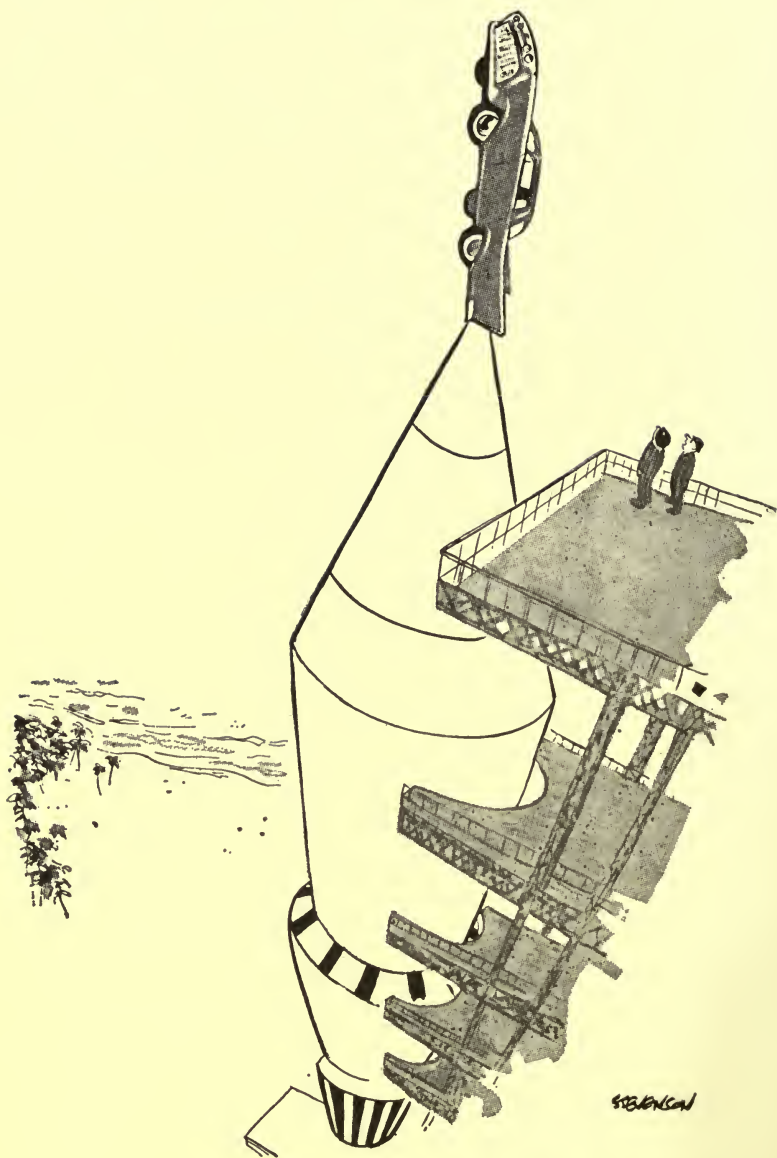
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# THE HIGHWAY JUNGLE



*"I'll be more than just a space achievement, Larry. I'll be  
a symbol to the world of our abundant way of life."*

(Drawing by Stevenson; © 1960 by The New Yorker Magazine, Inc.)

# THE HIGHWAY JUNGLE

*The Story of the Public Safety Movement  
and of the Failure of  
"Driver Education" in the Public Schools*

BY

Edward A. Tenney

FOREWORD BY

Edward Uhlan

ILLUSTRATED



*An Exposition—Banner Book*

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To

I R E N E



## Foreword

THIS SHARPLY critical book has a constructive purpose. We—parents and teachers, lawmakers and citizens—have been lulled into accepting driver education in the public schools as insurance that the driver of the future will be a safe driver. But this thoughtful and thorough study reveals that driver education neither educates academically nor visibly reduces accidents. Far from it. Rather, attention is diverted by it from essential education, and driver training as such is not successfully taught.

*The Highway Jungle* presents these facts objectively but mercilessly and is a call to action. As the constructive criticism develops, the citizen-reader can see for himself the size of the mistake we are making.

Millions paid by us in taxes, which might be otherwise usefully spent, are drained away annually in the “fun” courses in “driver education.” Meanwhile, we are sadly neglecting the needs of the Departments of Motor Vehicles in the various states which must cope with the problem of enforcing law and order on our roads; they are languishing in comparative poverty.

Dr. Tenney is to be congratulated on having undertaken the painful but necessary task of giving us the facts, without which no constructive corrective steps can be taken.

EDWARD UHLAN  
President  
Exposition Press Inc.





## *Acknowledgments*

THE NUMBER of those to whom I am indebted for material embedded in this book is too large to be listed. Moreover, the warring factions within the safety movement make it advisable not to name persons from insurance, education, and industry who have expressed privately both in conference and by correspondence many of the unorthodox beliefs recorded here. The National Safety Council, the numerous safety foundations established by commerce, the public relations departments of the insurance business and of the great corporations which make and dispense autos, tires, and gas and oil have freely and generously discussed our complex safety problems. Because public relations men fill delicate positions, I think it would be ungracious to publicize their deviations from the official safety line.

To the librarians of the National Safety Council in Chicago, the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, and Michigan State University at East Lansing, I am indebted for many a courtesy and much benevolence. To the administration of Indiana State College at Terre Haute I am indebted for a sabbatical and for a leave of absence in which to study the problem and to write it up.

E. A. T.

*Barton City, Michigan*



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## Introduction

WHEN A congressional committee or a similar committee from a state legislature, or the board of education of a great city, holds a hearing on the merits of driver education, professional "experts" crowd the hearing hall and give testimony. No representative of John Q. Public testifies, because his interest is theoretically cared for by those who hold the hearings and judge the expert testimony. To date no ordinary citizen, the person outside looking in, has undertaken a study of this social phenomenon so as to write about it objectively. The English have such a book on a larger scale, an excellent volume by C. D. Buchanan entitled *Mixed Blessing: The Motor in Britain*. It is a complete study of the impact of the motor vehicle on British social life over the last half century. Such a work is needed in this country, and doubtless it will appear some day. The book in hand is only a chapter of the larger history, for the larger study is well beyond the author's range.

But since the question of physical safety on our highways is important, and since the question of the academic excellence of our schools is also important, the author has undertaken this work in the hope of clarifying the issues and of throwing a ray of light upon a dark and confused subject. At the moment (1962) the matter is so charged with emotion that the school-board member who casts a vote against driver education may find himself charged with harboring a sadistic desire to mutilate his fellow citizens by encouraging the reckless use of cars on the public highways.

To help clarify the subject, the author has selected seven aspects of the subject for analysis and discussion and has tried to arrange them so that each casts some light on those that follow. The first is the historical question of how in 1936 the cult or mystique of driver education rose from the complex interior of the safety movement. This background is needed if

the reader is to see the subject in its religious and social context. The second is a study of the basic difference between driver education and driver training. So much confusion exists here that these antonyms are often used as synonyms. Third is the problem of the intrinsic excellence of driver education as an academic subject. A discussion of this problem involves both the quality of the textbooks used and the education of the teacher who interprets the texts. The fourth is the much-debated question of the extrinsic excellence of driver education in terms of its power to save lives, eliminate injuries, and conserve property. The fifth is that of the degree to which the course is commercialized and whether this commercialization helps or harms the academic life of the schools. A sixth is the delicate problem of the right relationships of parent to school and of school to parent, for a basic issue in civil rights seems to be emerging. Several states have passed laws which limit a parent's "right to teach." Heretofore, this right has been taken for granted, except when the character of the parent was evil and the state took the child into custody for both the common welfare and the child's good.

The final chapters survey the problem in terms of the future and of the larger social context. The important question of the judicious use of the car in an urban industrialized society is presently in debate. People are now discussing "the car-smothered city." In our ever-expanding metropolitan pattern, school boards as well as statesmen need to consider the over-all question of civic welfare and whether the numerical multiplication of cars and their drivers is wholesome or unwholesome in such areas. It is this large problem which Buchanan discusses in his *Mixed Blessing: The Motor in Britain* and Lewis Mumford in *The City in History*.

The author writes from the point of view of the citizen who has no ax to grind, no special cause to uphold, no special business to promote. He has the normal prejudices of such a person. He is for safety and against sin. He favors education from the neck up rather than from the shoulders down. He thinks that some things are more important than others and that the most important should have priority. He likewise harbors the common view that the function of the schools is and should be a



limited function, and that therefore the kind and amount of social service that the school offers should be judiciously subordinated, lest primary function drop out of sight altogether. From within the limitation imposed by this normal frame of reference, the author has endeavored to view the subject objectively. Whether he has succeeded is for the reader to decide.

E. A. T.



THE HIGHWAY JUNGLE



## CHAPTER I

### *Historical Background*

How THE Green Cross Safety Movement got started and how it grew is a history as yet unwritten. At present it and the Red Cross are among the largest independent organizations in the country. Yet the green cross, the symbol of safety, is much less well known than the red one, the symbol of help in catastrophe. One reason for this is that the accident that doesn't happen is unspectacular. Another is that the great "accident" of war brings in the Red Cross, not the Green. A third is that accident prevention can have no heights, no climaxes, no grand breakthroughs, as in medicine when a Salk vaccine paralyzes polio itself. It is peaceful work. The quiet labors of parents with their children, teachers with their pupils, communities with their traffic problems, industries with their technical hazards, often pass unnoticed because we are all involved; each of us contributes a little. "The whole philosophy of safety," said a past president of the National Safety Council, "is to be found in the two words: Be careful." Thus the essential work of "safety" is that of training all of us to be more cautious and more alert, and to use "safety" devices to protect us from injury.

The National Safety Council was officially chartered by Congress in 1953 to head the safety movement. What the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents is to Great Britain the National Safety Council is to us: a voluntary organization dedicated to a good purpose—that of our common welfare—by reducing the number of risks to life and limb, especially those to which we all are subject when we lead congested lives in congested cities, where the hum of business and industry is so often broken by the siren of the ambulance.

At the beginning of this century in our Indian Summer decade (1900–1910) men's minds were turning more and more to the growing problem of the terrible industrial accident which kills or mutilates, and which usually leads not only to private

grief and personal pain but to such larger problems as the broken family and the orphaned child. At that time an increased concern for social justice, a growing awareness of the need for everyone to share the misfortunes which befall many poor people when, in an industrialized society, an accident overwhelms one of them, led us to study the evil and to lessen it somewhat by such legislation as that embodied in workman's compensation laws.

In the nineteenth century the railroad had consumed human lives at an awe-inspiring rate, and so had such a rugged industry as steel. Coal mining, which supported both steel and rails, killed and crippled relentlessly. With the arrival of electricity and the internal-combustion engine, transportation for everyone at lethal speeds was just around the corner. "Every man his own locomotive" was to become first the dream, then the reality, and finally the terror of the twentieth century. To an Irish lady and an English gentleman go the honors for anticipating the new age in 1896 when, on August 17, Mrs. Bridgette Driscoll, age 44, was knocked down and killed near the Crystal Palace in London by a horseless carriage. The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents reports that the gentleman in the carriage testified that he was driving at four miles an hour, that his vehicle had a top speed of eight, that he saw Mrs. Driscoll in time to ring his bell and to shout at her. Another story, deemed apocryphal by some, is that the "honors" should go to the United States because, in Ohio in 1895, when there were but two cars in the entire state, they met and one driver was killed.

Hence when the organized safety movement got started in the second decade of this century, it plowed a fertile field and soon began to harvest an abundant crop.

The National Safety Council established itself in October of 1912 under the name of Co-operative Safety Congress. Five years earlier the Association of Iron and Steel Engineers had organized and had set up a committee to study the new hazards created by the increased use of electricity in making steel. This same association, at a now famous Hotel Pfister meeting in Milwaukee, appointed a special committee to establish a permanent council. The *Proceedings* (1912) of the First Co-operative Safety Congress records the following:

*Resolved*, That the President of the Association of Iron and Steel Electrical Engineers be requested to take the first steps towards the formation of a National Organization for the promotion of safety to human life by appointing a committee on Permanent Organization . . . the committee so appointed shall be and hereby is authorized to organize and to create a permanent body devoted to the promotion of safety in human life in the industries of the United States; this committee shall have authority to call future Congresses of safety, increase its membership if it so desires, and to do such other acts as will promote the object for which it is established.

An ancient safety law, printed on the back of the program for this meeting, reads:

LEST WE FORGET

When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thine house, if any man fall from thence.

DEUTERONOMY xiii:8

In October of 1913 the National Council for Industrial Safety was formally instituted with R. W. Campbell as its first president. According to *Manufacturer's News* he said:

The Manufacturers of this country are today confronted with a very vital problem, i.e., what shall be done in the way of accident prevention work? Increased efficiency and economy of operation practically make it a necessity. Humanity demands it. The spirit of the times calls loudly for it, and "Safety First" has become one of the slogans of the day . . . nor is the value of safety work any longer seriously questioned. The experience of recent years has shown that where such work is earnestly undertaken a reduction of 33½ to 70 per cent can be made in the number of industrial accidents in industrial plants where even the greatest hazards exist. It is, therefore, a practical work; . . . above all, however, accident prevention work is humanitarian work to which today the finger of duty points. It is an obligation which honestly may not be avoided or delayed in its fulfillment.

In December of the same year the first poster of the type now common appeared. It pictures the bust of a collarless, hollow-cheeked, one-eyed worker and the caption reads:



SAFETY SPECTACLES WOULD HAVE SAVED THIS EYE  
WHY TAKE A CHANCE AND BE MAIMED FOR LIFE?  
SAFETY FIRST

The first safety reader for elementary schools was published by the World Book Company at the request of the congress. It carried the title *Sure Pop and the Safety Scouts*.

Success in industry pointed toward success everywhere. (In 1912, 35,000 workmen died of industrial accidents; in 1958, 13,300.) At its annual meeting in 1914 the congress nationalized itself by adding public safety to industrial safety. In recognition that one purpose of the congress should be "the fulfillment of the same function in the Public Safety field as in Industrial Safety, the members unanimously voted to change the name of the organization . . . to National Safety Council, and in both constitution and by-laws appropriate amendments were made." Thus the council became spokesman for the United States by the unanimous vote of those present at an annual meeting. This action in 1914 was ratified in 1953 when the federal Congress granted a charter to the council recognizing it as a central agency for the gathering and dissemination of safety information and propaganda.

The history of the growth of the industrial-safety movement is too long to be recorded here, though the pleasure is great at seeing good propaganda take root, flourish, and achieve its aim so completely that today a citizen is said to be safer working in a factory or a coal mine than he is walking or riding on our streets.

The history of public safety is not such pleasant reading, because of the painful fact that, as industrial accidents declined, public off-the-job accidents increased. When, in March, 1915, the council established a Public Safety Section, it could have foreseen little of what was to follow; it could have had no notion how vast an area was to be covered and how conflicting the interests would be. What began in 1915 as a single section has now grown into a large collection of sections or divisions or departments, each with its special propaganda and special responsibility. The 1960 program for the annual Safety Congress gives an idea of their kind and number:

- |  |                                  |
|--|----------------------------------|
| 1. Aerospace                                   | 18. Metals                       |
| 2. Air Transport                               | 19. Mining                       |
| 3. Automotive and Machine Shop                 | 20. Occupational Health Nursing  |
| 4. Cement, Quarry, and Mineral Aggregates      | 21. Petroleum                    |
| 5. Chemical                                    | 22. Power Press and Forging      |
| 6. Coal Mining                                 | 23. Printing and Publishing      |
| 7. Commercial Vehicle                          | 24. Public Employees             |
| 8. Construction                                | 25. Public Utilities             |
| 9. Driver Education                            | 26. Pulp and Paper               |
| 10. Electrical Equipment                       | 27. Railroad                     |
| 11. Elementary School                          | 28. Rubber                       |
| 12. Fertilizer                                 | 29. Safety Education Supervisors |
| 13. Food and Beverage                          | 30. Textiles                     |
| 14. Glass and Ceramics                         | 31. Trades and Services          |
| 15. Higher Education                           | 32. Transit                      |
| 16. Marine                                     | 33. Wood Products                |
| 17. Meat Packing, Tanning and Leather Products |                                  |

So extensive and involved had the problem of public safety become that at this 1960 Annual Safety Congress 863 or more speakers addressed 12,000 or more participants for five days in the convention rooms of eight hotels. Moreover, in all these divisions the larger problem of public safety mixed with industrial safety because the new term "off-the-job safety" or "safety everywhere—all the time" means that the council has expanded its range to include the whole of human life from physical through spiritual. In the realm of the spiritual there is now a Religious Activities Department to help solve the problem of off-the-job safety. Here the study ranges from the problem of fireproofing churches to that of safety-proofing souls.

When in 1915 the council undertook propaganda for public safety, it was still thinking in terms of industrial safety. It was thinking of the problem of the safe use of machines when these passed from the private domain of industry into the public domain, where the citizen used the machine in his home or on the streets. In this area strict control by the safety engineer employed by management could not be exercised. To meet this new situation a pioneer in the movement, Julien H. Harvey,

suggested, in or about 1915, a triple propaganda which came to be known as the three E's—Engineering, Enforcement, Education. (When Harvey died on March 1, 1960, he was memorialized in the national press as "the author of the three E's.") Although autos were still a luxury, trolleys and railroads created public hazards along with those made by bicycles and horses. The odd mixture on a city street of horses, trolleys, bicycles, autos, and pedestrians created a traffic pattern laden with risk and productive of accidents. Increasing congestion called for new engineering techniques in laying out streets, new laws and regulations for their use, and a new training of each citizen in the art of getting himself from one place to another without injury. In other words, the problem of a safe transportation system was getting larger and more difficult as citizens were forced to jockey for position on roads and crosswalks.

The slogan Engineering, Enforcement, Education came to mean, in public safety, organized propaganda (1) for safer roads and safer cars, (2) for wiser laws and juster traffic courts, (3) for an educational system designed to produce the safe driver and the safe pedestrian. In only one of these three areas have clear-cut results been obtained. Our highway system is presently the world's safest and gives promise of becoming more so. No basic improvement is visible in the car which traverses this highway, for such improvements as safety glass, four-wheel brakes, windshield wipers, and the like have been negated by higher speeds with added risks. The 1961 Chrysler, advertised as capable of 140 m.p.h., is, at peak performance, probably as risky as was a Model-T in its wildest mood. The so-called "safe" car, designed for a packaged occupant, though it may be on the drawing boards, is not on the market. In the realm of wiser laws and wiser courts some improvement is to be noted. Those laws that recognize the evil of drunken driving are especially commendable. But licensing procedures and standards are both childish and venal in many states. In education the results are plainly dubious.

The reasons are many why the history of public safety in these three fields does not record achievement upon achievement, victory upon victory, as in industrial safety. The major one, however, is the hard fact that in public safety the interest

of everyone is not the same. In industrial safety, accident prevention raises the wages of the worker, increases the profits of the manufacturer, lowers the price of the product, and promotes both the economic and the physical health of the society. Any propaganda, therefore, which strives to make this good thing better meets little or no opposition, because the interest of each part is the interest of all. No sacrifice is involved. But in public safety enormous conflicts of interest emerge and great sacrifices are called for. Hence it is painful and unpleasant and unpopular. Consider, for example, the desire of commerce to transport its goods safely and efficiently over public highways. More non-commercial vehicles congesting the road mean greater inefficiency and danger to commerce. Conflicts of interest between walker and driver emerge constantly. Financial conflicts occur when a road is rerouted and a city bypassed. The value of one man's land rises and that of another falls. The desire of the auto industry to sell a million more cars in a given area may be in conflict with the capacity of the road system there to accommodate any more.

As time went on, the problems of the public-safety propaganda became more and more evident, and the ability of the safety movement and of the National Safety Council to handle them by means of propaganda grew progressively weaker. The conflict of interest with interest paralyzed action, and propaganda that forwarded the interests of one segment of society harmed another. Authors began writing books like John Keats' *The Insolent Chariots*; social critics like Lewis Mumford began discussing "the cancerous overgrowth of motorcars" in relation to civic life; and the death rate hummed along at about 37,000 annually. The clamor for federal action grows as the need for discipline makes itself felt in terms of death, injury, and property damage. In 1937, 39,643 were killed; in 1956, 39,628. These are our two deadliest years. The "best" year in the 1930's was 1932, which counted up 29,500 dead, and the "best" in the 1950's was the first, with 34,763. The attempt to salve the injured feelings of the dead by quoting statistics showing that they were and are getting more and more mileage before dying gives little comfort either to them or to those of us who stay behind and grieve. The absolute figures in men, women, and children killed

show no absolute improvement, suggest retrogression, and cast doubt on the efficacy of the public-safety propaganda.

It is the purpose of this book to explain to the citizen why so laudable a movement and such high-minded propaganda have failed. From 1915 to date deadly mistakes were made which have compounded until the decade 1950 to 1959, which should have shown a steadily declining death rate, shows 34,000 killed in 1950, and 37,000 in 1959. Harder facts are hard to find.



## CHAPTER II

# *Safety Education and Its Deadly Mistakes*

THE CITIZEN who reviews the life-adjustment theory of safety education can now recognize its deadliness if the worth of the theory is measured by the statistics just quoted. Other deadlier mistakes followed. But those who created and put the theory into practice dreamed only of a noble accident-proof society and sought only our common good. With zeal and good will, they promoted propaganda which, instead of ending avoidable death and injury on the highway, has left us a legacy of frustrated hopes and enlarged cemeteries. Among the deadly mistakes was that of asking our public school system to assume the major responsibility for ending this social evil. The story of how our schools happened to accept the added load is the subject of this chapter.

History is so full of chance as to make marvelous the writing of it. All that a historian can often record is "it so happened that X force met Y force" and that they either fought, parted, or joined. So here. At its beginning a young and energetic force, Safety Movement, happened to meet another young and energetic force, Life Adjustment; they liked each other, joined forces, and one of their operational products became safety education. Yet each was born in complete independence of the other. A group of electrical engineers started the safety movement in a Milwaukee hotel; a college professor from his ivory tower sent life adjustment on its way. The ifs of history are pure fun. If Professor John Dewey had by chance been born in 1912 and if the safety movement had begun in 1859 (the date of Dewey's birth) the main current of American education would have flowed in a different channel. But it happened that the two movements coincided in time and flowed together, each giving added volume and momentum to the other.

Professor John Dewey's ideas reflect what some people call the moral and social Darwinism of the nineteenth century. Like many of us, Dewey was a Puritan; he wanted to purify American life, purge it of its evils and make it good. By selecting aspects of the thought of the moral and social reformers of Queen Victoria's day, he developed an educational theory which, at Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, he taught so enthusiastically as to gain converts and disciples and to make Teachers College the center of a propaganda which spread across the country and soon became the chief feature of American education. Our colleges and universities taught his theory to prospective teachers, and these teachers in turn practiced it on their pupils. Various labels have been used to describe it: Progressive Education, Life Adjustment, Social Adjustment, Education for Citizenship. So all-pervasive was Dewey's influence that professors of education quarreled not about whether the theory was right but about how best to practice it. The different labels listed here arose out of the conflict over what part of Dewey's thought to emphasize most. Within a couple of decades, professors cited sentences from Dewey as theologians used to cite texts from the Old and New Testaments. The words "as Dewey says" followed by a quoted sentence were often sufficient to clinch an argument and silence dissent. The phrase "moral and social Darwinism" means this: Charles Darwin's biological hypothesis about how life on earth evolved from simple to complex, from single-celled animals to many-celled animals, led people to argue by analogy that the moral and social life of human beings follows the same pattern toward an earthly paradise. It was also argued that a study of biological growth would reveal the process or technique of spiritual growth. Thus the faith grew that in the science of biology lay the secret of human perfection. An English reformer, Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), defined progress in the biological terms of "adaptation to environment." It has been said that Dewey "biologized education," a phrase which means that he thought we should teach children to adjust to their environment; and from this aspect of his theory arose the label life adjustment.

It became an article of faith among his followers that the scientific technique for the progressive perfecting of human beings had been found, and that the one thing needful was the



mastery of the technique by teachers and its application to students. This done, the whole society would go up the escalator of progress from perfection to perfection. The great discoveries in the sciences of chemistry, physics, biology, medicine, and astronomy would then be matched by new discoveries in the spiritual realm, and the whole country would roll upward to a noble destiny, as high morally as it was powerful industrially. So great was this faith that our colleges and universities began to place more and more emphasis on what are called "methods" courses in adjustment techniques, or in guidance and counseling. Thus the belief arose that social salvation was the purpose of schools and that the schools were responsible for bearing this massive additional burden. The phrase "education of the whole child" meant to give to each child the perfect adjustment which the social educators thought the child needed.

The idea of the enlarged responsibility of the school within the framework of the new theory is best expressed by a typical definition. One of them reads as follows:

Education is the continuous reconstruction of the environment, physical and social, national and international, by scientific democratic instruments and methods, for the health, longevity, and increasing material and cultural [spiritual] satisfaction of all, through the active participation of the group [students] in these basic social functions:

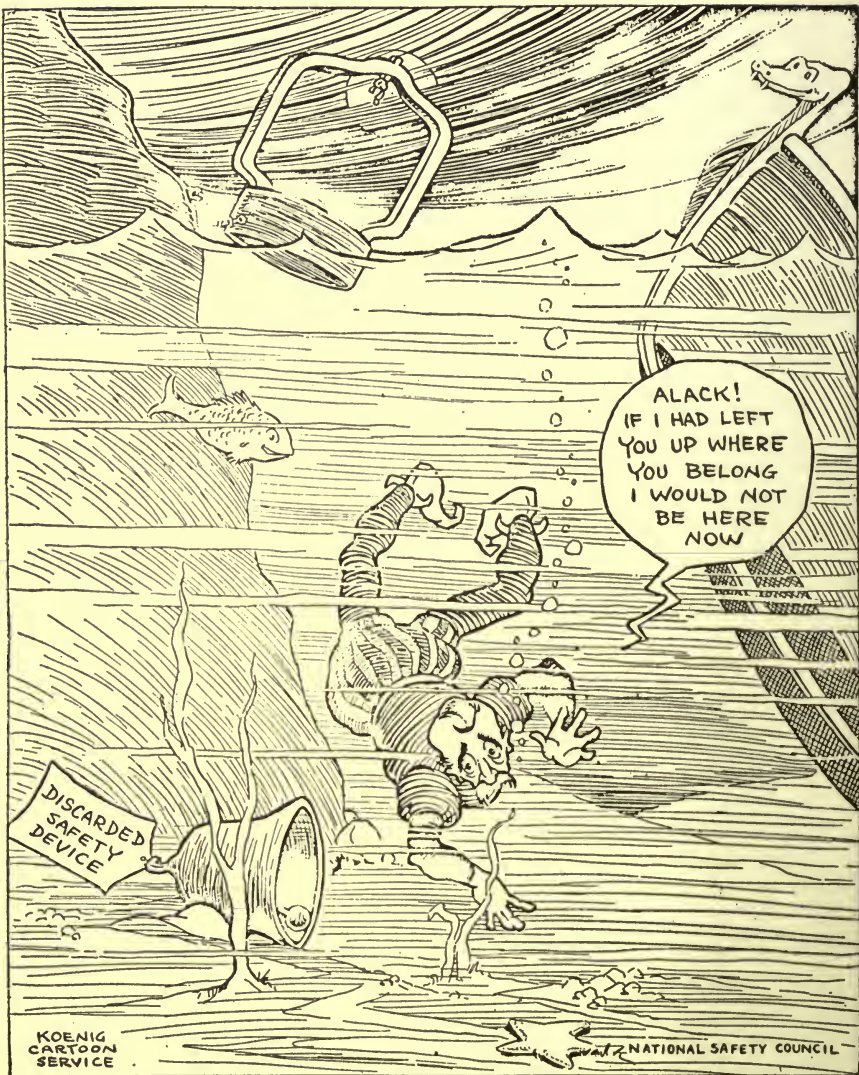
1. Communication
2. Production and distribution of goods and services
3. Consumption
4. Expression, recreation, appreciation
5. Perpetuation of race and heritage
6. Collective guarantees of peace, order, and security and the progressive orientation of the group [students] in these areas of experience:

1. The family
2. The school community
3. The local community
4. The regional community
5. The metropolitan community
6. The national community
7. The community of nations<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *California Journal of Secondary Education*, March, 1938, pp. 168-69.

SAFETY HINTS FROM HISTORY  
Sir Ralph the Reckless Rover and the Inchcape Rock



Courtesy of the National Safety Council.

An Example of an Early Type of Safety Teaching

The more the ordinary citizen studies this well-rounded sentence the more he will be impressed by its size. As he mulls it over, a commonplace thought may emerge: "Perhaps education is trying to carry too large a responsibility; perhaps the life adjusters have bitten off more than they can both chew and digest; perhaps social salvation is not as near at hand or as easy to achieve as was once thought; perhaps the belief that 'the scientific democratic instruments and methods' have actually been discovered is a false belief." At any rate, in many a citizen's mind the doubt lingers. The theory which in 1915 held out high hope, lit up by a golden promise, has in 1962 justified neither the hope nor the promise, if we ordinary citizens are permitted to judge by delinquency rates among young and old. Nor does the present death rate by autos suggest a new generation adjusted to its highway environment.

In 1918 the propaganda for progressive or life-adjustment schools was in full youthful vigor and the National Safety Council found in it an eager ally. No sooner had the council decided to expand into the domain of public safety and to carry out this plan by forming an Education Section than this section added its propaganda to that of the life adjusters. The new theory that the function of education is adaptation to environment fitted exactly the needs of safety. In particular the added hazard to children of fast-moving, slow-stopping vehicles created an environment deadly to children. The council's Education Section was advised by a committee of reputable life adjusters of the day: Philander P. Claxton, Tulsa; Elwood P. Cubberley, Palo Alto; Stephen P. Duggan, New York; Charles H. Judd, Chicago; William McAndrew, Chicago; A. B. Meredith, Hartford; Harold Rugg, New York; Payson Smith, Boston.

An insurance executive, Albert Wurts Whitney, became permanent chairman of the committee in 1919; and the president of Harris Teachers College, St. Louis, Dr. Enoch George Payne, became its vice-chairman. In time these two men emerged as the major figures in safety education. Whitney gained such fame that he has been memorialized in a biography entitled *Safety for Greater Adventures*; Payne's biography is still unwritten.

Dr. Enoch George Payne (1877-1953), eminent sociologist



and eminent educator, was president of Harris Teachers College in St. Louis when the National Safety Council asked him in 1918 to write the treatise on safety education which became its Magna Carta. His talents were such that by forty he had risen to be college president. Later he moved on up to become dean of the School of Education of New York University. He founded the Payne Educational Sociology Foundation, Inc., and he edited its magazine, *The Journal of Educational Sociology*. Although he wrote widely on many other aspects of sociology, until 1937 his favorite subject was safety education. Prior to this date he and Whitney collaborated; in 1937, however, they quarreled in print and each went his own way. The quarrel was over driver education, and the argument will be reviewed in a later chapter.

Albert Wurts Whitney (1870-1943) had more natural genius than Payne. Although both began as teachers, Whitney moved out of teaching mathematics and insurance into an executive position in the insurance business. He was extremely versatile and amazingly energetic. His grasp of insurance theory and insurance law was such as to create a demand for his services in interpreting and implementing workman's compensation laws. At heart he was a social reformer, and to the safety movement he dedicated the major part of his endless supply of energy. It is quite possible that had he so chosen, he might have risen to the top ranks in insurance and have died a wealthy man.

His final position in insurance was that of manager of the Accident Prevention Department of the National Bureau of Casualty Underwriters, New York City. He appears to have taken this post, which he held for a quarter of a century, not because it paid well but because it was strategically situated for carrying out the propaganda to which he was so completely devoted. The position gave him ample elbow room. He was free to come and go as he pleased, and no blade of grass ever sprouted beneath the sole of his restless foot. He was in demand as a speaker all over the country. In New York was located Columbia Teachers College, and to its Scholia Club he belonged; hence his beliefs as leader of the National Safety Council's Education Section could be readily and naturally synchronized with those of the life adjusters. Professors Harold Rugg and William Kilpatrick, famous disciples of John Dewey, he numbered among

his friends. He was the ideal man to lead propaganda, for he had a fertile mind; like a quail he hatched three broods of ideas a year and he did not let them die. He set a man or a group to the job of carrying them through, and he saw to it that they did.

His devotion to safety was such that everyone trusted him. He became what is now known as an "angel." If money was needed to promote some aspect of the work, Uncle Alby would find it, raise it somewhere, somehow. Indicative of the devotion he inspired within the movement is this affectionate nickname, Uncle Alby.

A list of all the things he did or got others to do as he exercised his "angelic" powers would fill a notebook. A few typical ones illustrate his ingenuity and range. He promoted the publication in 1919 of *Education in Accident Prevention*, and in the same year addressed the annual meeting of the National Education Association on "Safety Education in Public Schools." In 1922 he persuaded the stock casualty-insurance industry to underwrite by an annual grant the costs of the Education Section of the National Safety Council. In 1924 he put the magazine *Safety Education* on a permanent footing and became a frequent contributor to it. In 1925 he persuaded the National Society for the Study of Education to make safety education the subject of the first volume of its *Yearbook* for the following year. In 1926, he saw to it that money for fellowships to subsidize research was available; and in 1927 and in 1929 two doctoral dissertations appeared from Columbia Teachers College: "Safety Education in the Elementary Schools" by Ruth Streit and "Safety Education in the Secondary Schools" by Herbert J. Stack. In 1931 appeared the Ph.D. thesis (Columbia) "Safety and Health in Organized Camps" by J. Edward Sanders. In 1936 he worked at getting driver education into the public schools and himself edited and partly wrote a textbook, *Man and the Motor Car*. In 1938 he promoted the Center for Safety Education at New York University and saw to it that the center was appropriately subsidized thereafter. His hope to see a Safety University was never realized. These are a few of Whitney's extracurricular activities, in addition to his regular work as an insurance executive. The title "public servant" fits him well.

His philosophic genius, however, was inferior to his genius

for organization, persuasion, and management. His attempt to create a philosophy of safety got fouled up in the fallacies of his day. As will be seen later, his dream of an accident-proof society was shipwrecked on the jagged rock of fact.

In 1919 the National Safety Council sponsored a book written by E. George Payne with a chapter by Albert W. Whitney, a book that became the Magna Carta of safety education. An experiment aimed at discovering the technique for safety-proofing future citizens had been conducted throughout the school system of St. Louis. Payne, president of Harris Teachers College, and his faculty collaborated with the superintendent of schools in St. Louis and with his faculties in the schools around the city to see whether a new type of curriculum would change the character of children and immunize them against avoidable accidents. The experiment was direct and uninvolved. It proposed to find the answer to the questions: What would happen if each and every subject in all grades throughout the system were so revised as to aim at developing one type of youth, the "safety-minded" one? Could a conditioning process be developed that would make the be-careful habit habitual? Could this habit be so imbedded into the subconscious parts of the child's mind that a new kind of instinctive response would come into existence? The experiment was tried and pronounced successful. The book *Education in Accident Prevention* details the experiment and explains the technique for getting the desired result.

The great charter of life adjusters in the realm of safety is Chapter II of *Education in Accident Prevention*, entitled "The Justification of Teaching Accident Prevention." This document is here reprinted with a commentary because of its importance to any citizen who wishes to understand some of the whys of American education for the last half century. The reader should keep in mind one fact: Dr. Payne is advocating a shift from accident prevention as an extracurricular activity in which the whole school takes part, as in fire drills and school patrols, to the introduction of accident prevention as a central feature of the required classroom curriculum. The old accident-prevention training was based on discipline: running up and downstairs was forbidden, and so was tripping. Little children were dismissed first and were to leave the school grounds before the

crush of older, bigger ones could hurt them. Accident prevention was a normal part of the total discipline, and school boards required that everyone work together to prevent the avoidable accident which arises when youth runs wild in crowds. It is true that many accidents did happen, that the discipline was imperfect, that boys especially delighted in tripping each other and playing dangerous tricks on stairways; but every school had a discipline in accident prevention. Payne's propaganda, therefore, is not a propaganda to introduce "safety education" into the public schools; it is a propaganda to remove it from its position as a common extracurricular discipline in being careful, and make it a curricular study—in other words, a new social science.

The older idea that the school was responsible for a network of regulations by which everyone worked at the problem of accident prevention within the precincts of the school and its environs was to be changed. As Payne himself expresses it toward the end of his "Justification," the basic purpose of safety education is not safety but the "socialized child." The old type of accident prevention may have saved many lives and countless injuries, but it did not aim to produce the adjusted or adjustable child. It was *not* a social science.

One further comment is needed. "Safety education" in Payne's mind was but one of many similar new social sciences which would gradually take over the curriculum. The method was the same whether it was the accident problem which needed to be solved or the divorce problem which called for a solution by use of the new scientific democratic instruments and methods. A rightly "oriented" curriculum would create this socialized child who, with the "right" attitude engendered by the "right" method, would in time renovate the whole society and make what is into what ought to be.

A commentary in brackets and in footnotes has been added. Its purpose is to call the citizen's attention to the salient features of a life adjuster's thought. The labels "life adjuster" and "life adjustment" have been used in preference to the labels "social adjuster" and "social adjustment" because the former are more common. But advanced educational reformers today assert that the correct terms are "social adjuster" and "social adjustment." The citizen may, if he prefers, use these more advanced words



to replace the older ones in what follows. He will find that he can do so without injury to the thought.

## EDUCATION IN ACCIDENT PREVENTION

### Chapter II

#### *The Justification of Teaching Accident Prevention*

by Dr. E. George Payne

FROM the foregoing discussion [of the economics of accident prevention] it is clear to anyone that there is need of some consistent effort to reduce the number of public accidents. It also appears clear that if the school can do something to this end, it is wholly justified in including in its curriculum instruction designed to decrease the constantly growing number of accidents and deaths. The problem, then, is to determine whether there is a way of introducing instruction in accident prevention that will accomplish the desired object. It is believed that it is not only possible to carry out such a plan of instruction, but that it is entirely in line with modern educational thought. Recent years of educational progress have brought about a transformation in educational theory, and have witnessed a marked tendency to reform educational practice.

We [life adjusters] have come to regard education purely with reference to its effect on some form of behavior of the individual. We no longer look upon the function of education as being that of giving information about arithmetic, geography, and the like, but as a means of securing to the individual the right sort of social action, and of developing in the individual the right kind of feelings, attitudes, points of view, and ideals.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This sentence clearly defines the changed function of public schools. The education of the heart is to dominate; the education of the head is to be made subordinate. When this happens, the schools become religious institutions. The school which aims to teach right feelings, right attitudes, right points of view, and right ideals aims at a dogmatic religious teaching. Before right feelings, attitudes, views, and ideals can be taught, they must be known. When this absolute knowledge is inscribed in rules, principles, laws, and dogmas, the resulting science is a theology. What Payne advocates both here and elsewhere in this "Justification" is the conversion of the public school into a religious institution run by a secular priesthood, the scientific sociologist like him and the scientific psychologist of the time. The purpose of the new institution is to put the "right" kind of sociological heart into the "rightly" psychologized child.



We look upon the various subjects in the curriculum as means to these ends.

The new theory of education, which is opposed to the old disciplinary conception, has been making itself felt in the twentieth century in concentrating attention upon the need, in some way, of relating instruction to the pupils in such a way as to bring about a modification of their behavior. At the same time, emphasis has been placed upon behavior in its social aspects. Therefore, educational writers and speakers of the twentieth century have put unusual emphasis upon the social aim of education. Educators [life adjusters] now usually agree that the outcome of education shall be fixed behavior,<sup>2</sup>—that is, habits, attitudes, ideals, points of view, and sentiments, that will affect the child's behavior. They also agree that the emphasis shall be upon the behavior of the individual in its social bearing.

It is interesting at this point to note the trend of educational discussion whereby this conclusion has been reached. Naturally, the new and unusual interest in scientific psychology, manifested in the latter part of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, caused the first discussion to center around the child and development of the child nature. The first advance toward the present theory was, therefore, a psychological one. As the discussion proceeded, the logical outcome was emphasis upon the curriculum; and whole recent effort of school men has been to discover means of enriching the curriculum<sup>3</sup>—still later, to enrich the curriculum through socializing the subject matter of

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<sup>2</sup> The concept of "fixed behavior" as the purpose of education shows how contemptuous of parental rights these life adjusters had become. Many an American citizen does not want his child to be either "fixed" or "unfixed," a conformist or a nonconformist. He wants his boy or girl to become capable of freely making intelligent decisions. He thus sends him to school in the hope of his becoming not "fixed" but free.

<sup>3</sup> The phrase "enriching the curriculum" is strictly a propaganda slogan. The life adjusters maintain that each new social science added to the curriculum "enriches" it. Driver education, for example, is such an "enrichment." The citizen is not told that addition at one point necessitates subtraction at another. Neither is the citizen told that "impoverishment" occurs whenever the work added is inferior to the work dropped. As Payne points out later, he favors impoverishing mathematics to enrich sociology.

instruction. We are now in the midst of a concerted movement [propaganda effort], backed by educators [ourselves] and even by the United States Government, to introduce the social sciences into the elementary and secondary school curriculum. The National Government recently has taken considerable pains to prepare a series of lessons on community and national life, and to provide material for socializing the curriculum, because of the paucity of such material available for purposes of instruction. These two points of emphasis, the child nature and the subject matter, represent virtually the progress that has been made in educational theory and practice toward the enlargement of the curriculum and its adaptation to the child for purposes of affecting his behavior in a social way.

There is another element in the educational situation, which has not received sufficient emphasis; indeed, by many it has been neglected altogether. There are conditions in society for which we wish to develop controls [fixed behavior] in the children through school instruction. The important questions to ask and to answer are: What kinds of controls or behavior is the child going to need in the social life to make him an effective individual? Over what sort of situations must he gain mastery? We are practically more concerned with socializing the child, than we are with socializing the curriculum. In fact, we are primarily interested in the child and the social life, and in the conditions he is to master, and only incidentally in the curriculum. We are interested in the curriculum only in so far as it will prepare the child to control his environment now, and as an adult later on. That is, we are actually concerned, among other things, with the health of the child, with his play and recreation, with his bodily vigor, with his vocational information and fitness, with his citizenship, with his voting, with his moral actions, and how he is to control the questions in society so that he may enjoy an abundant life.<sup>4</sup> We are interested in the curriculum only in so far as it will promote good health and bodily vigor, as it will cause individuals to play and enjoy recreation, as it will give vocational fitness, and in so far as it will make for a moral and upright citizenship. The child must

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<sup>4</sup> Another slogan of the life adjuster is this of education for joy, for "the abundant life."

know his environment, he must have proper habits and attitudes toward it in order to control it, and the curriculum must serve this function.

This view of education gives point to the teaching of accident prevention. It was shown in the first chapter that there is great need of developing control over the situations that cause accidents. The problem at once becomes that of determining how the curriculum may be made to contribute to that end. If the curriculum does not satisfy the demands of the social situation, then we must revise the curriculum.<sup>5</sup> The revision must look to the development of controls that will enhance the effectiveness of the child in the community and provide for his future.

No single factor has contributed so much to this educational movement, that is, to the utilization of instruction to secure proper types of social action, as the war, the effort on the part of educators to meet war demands. When those in charge of the Red Cross, Liberty Loans, and other war activities began to turn to the schools, and to seek a contribution from them toward the carrying on of the war, it looked as if the schools perforce would have to devote much of their time to extra-curricular activities. The seriousness of these added demands upon the time of the pupils, the demands for outside activities—for the schools recognized that they must do their part in the winning of the war—led them to consider methods of minimizing the effects of these outside demands, and the loss incurred in devoting a large amount of time to war activities. Every teacher in St. Louis is familiar with the outcome of this effort, as the results have been published in "The Manual of War Work of the St. Louis Public Schools," and every teacher has participated in securing these results. Every teacher in the country is more or less familiar with the effect of the war on the schools, as nearly every city has proudly pointed to its achievements, not only in helping to win the war, but to the superior work done at the same time. Teachers have felt the renewed interest

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<sup>5</sup> This sentence well illustrates the central dogma of the life adjuster. He believes that the purpose of a school is that of a social-welfare agency. Payne says that the social scene should create the curriculum. Thus apparently in a depressed coal-mining region, the social situation would "demand" a depressed coal-mining curriculum.

and enthusiasm on the part of the children, aroused by a great social motive that gave deeper meaning to curriculum instruction. The opinion is unanimous, that instead of the war interfering with the realization of the aims and objects set forth in the curriculum, it vitalized the work of instruction to such an extent that the purposes of the course of study were realized much more effectively than they had ever been. More information has been given, and the information has been so completely tied up with the social activities of the community, that the knowledge gained has been much more valuable to the child than it has been in previous times. In other words, the war activities themselves added new life to the curriculum and thereby vitalized school instruction.<sup>6</sup>

Now that peace has come, and we no longer have the problem of war to vitalize the work of instruction, we naturally turn to our social needs to see whether they will serve the same purpose; whether we cannot tie up the work of instruction with community, national and even international needs, in such a way as to make the instruction vital. The practical outcome of the war activities in the school has been to prepare teachers to look for social problems, or social needs, as means of socializing the child and vitalizing instruction in the classroom. They are ready to use social problems to give meaning to the curriculum and to motivate the work of instruction. We have innumerable problems at hand that will serve this purpose. Among the significant social needs is that of accident prevention.

It is clear, then, from the foregoing discussion that to teach

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<sup>6</sup> The history of the next two decades (1921-40) shows how self-deceived the life adjusters were. The youth of the land, wonderfully vitalized by the richly instructive social experience of World War I, should have energized and ennobled the nation in these subsequent decades. Our social historians record no such result. When President Roosevelt took office in 1932, he found himself the head of a stagnant nation. He is now honored for having fought the good fight against stagnation, for having "primed the pump," for having resuscitated a moribund, depressed people. Yet the life adjusters still insist that the excellence of their theory shall be tested by the social behavior of their product. They request all citizens to judge by the results. It therefore is only fair for a citizen to ask whether today, after forty years of life adjustment, we all have developed the *right* feelings, attitudes, views, and ideals which were promised us so long ago.



accident prevention we do not have in mind introducing the new material as an extra subject, but a method of giving vital content to the regular subjects, and, in addition, of realizing social aims. Since it is the fundamental purpose of the curriculum to realize desirable types of behavior in the child, and since it is the purpose of instruction to prepare the pupils for meeting the situations of life, the problem of the teacher and the school administrator is to select the subject matter that will secure these results most effectively. By searching the more modern school curricula, we find they afford the amount, kind and variety of material necessary for teaching accident prevention. The question arises at once, What are the elements involved in the teaching of accident prevention?

There are no new elements involved in the teaching of accident prevention. In other words, learning how to control oneself on the streets, in the home, and in the factory, and how to escape accidents that usually occur there, is similar to the process involved in learning the correct use of English, or in learning arithmetic. In learning the correct use of English, pupils need to acquire habits, on the one hand, of correct use and, on the other hand, of consciousness of good English form. These habits should be accompanied by a desire to use good English. The whole process then involves habits, and a body of knowledge and ideals. In learning arithmetic, we have a similar situation. One must learn the fundamental processes of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of numbers, of both whole numbers and fractions. This is largely a matter of habit. In addition to this one needs a large body<sup>7</sup> of social information, to which he may apply these fundamental processes in the solution of problems.

Learning to avoid accidents and helping others to do so is a matter, on the one hand, of fixing habits of action and, on the other, of becoming conscious of accident situations, as well as of developing attitudes and ideas in relation to the whole prob-

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<sup>7</sup> Here Payne points up the alleged need for less mathematics and more sociology. The little mathematical habit of using numbers accurately can easily be established as youth uses elementary arithmetic to solve one social problem after another. The need for advanced arithmetic and elementary algebra is not mentioned.

lem of accidents, including compensation laws, insurance, and other social practices growing out of accidents. Accident prevention, then, requires a large body of knowledge with appropriate ideals, sentiments and attitudes. For instance, we are careful to make the distinction between avoidable accidents and injuries received in the performance of duties. We develop the notion that it is a disgrace to receive a bodily injury that is avoidable or comes through carelessness. The person that receives such an injury is not a hero among his comrades, while a person who displays courage in the presence of danger, when some social end may be served, becomes a hero and is rewarded. It is accident prevention, and that even at the expense of injury to oneself, that counts. Such accident prevention makes for constructive citizenship and patriotism.<sup>8</sup>

Before closing this chapter, it is necessary to make clear that the teaching of accident prevention involves two conditions to make it effective. The first condition is to make the teaching concerning accidents a regular and serious part of the instruction in the classroom. No week must go by in which it is not made a problem, in one or more subjects of instruction. While no hard and fast rule can be laid down, and much must be left to the judgment of the teacher, she must have clearly in mind the seriousness of accidents, and the importance of giving the matter constant attention. The success of teaching accident prevention will also depend very largely upon the extent to which the school, as a whole, may be organized into a welfare organization<sup>9</sup> that will assume a share in the responsibility for accident prevention in the community. We present in a later chapter a detailed discussion of an effective organization as an example of what can be done in this respect.

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<sup>8</sup> This argument is central to the theory and repeats itself as the years roll on. For example, today the twin social sciences of safety education and of driver education are hailed as meritorious requirements essential to the proper adjustment of youth because "they make for constructive citizenship and patriotism."

<sup>9</sup> Note this lucid expression of the life adjuster's idea of what a school should be. The school as a "welfare organization" responsible for the "health, vigor, safety, feelings, attitudes, sentiments and ideals" of the nation is a standard idea dear to the heart of this kind of educator. No mention is made of intellectual health and vigor.

This chapter may be closed with a word of emphasis upon the value of this important social matter, as a means of motivating the school work. Even if the instruction in accident prevention should not decrease accidents in the community, it is justifiable purely on the grounds of its value in giving vitality to the work of the classroom. The experience of teachers is that no other thing has offered such a motive not only for learning to read, but for acquiring the habit of doing the right kind of reading,<sup>10</sup> as the subject of accident prevention. The children become readers of newspapers and magazines, an essential habit for citizens in a modern community. The same value attaches to accident prevention as a means of motivation in English. The fact is, it is an effective means of vitalizing all the subjects of the curriculum, as is made clear in the following chapters.

Without stating the discussion in current educational phraseology, it is clear that the plan proposed for the teaching of accident prevention means a socialized educational process, and the project method<sup>11</sup> of teaching in a nearly ideal form. It is impossible to teach accident prevention without the child's having a purpose underlying his study. The purpose changes the whole attitude of the child toward his work, and leads him to pursue it with vigor and earnestness. It is easy, moreover, to break away from the formal recitation since this is a new subject matter, and the ostensible<sup>12</sup> purpose of its presentation is the prevention of accidents and the inculcation of ideals of carefulness. The impelling motives make the learning of the formal

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<sup>10</sup> The life adjusters have long been vexed with the problem of getting the wrong kind of reading out of the curriculum and of putting in "the right kind." For example, *The Adventures of Alice in Wonderland* is the wrong kind—it solves no social problem, serves no social end. But the safety reader, *Sure Pop and the Safety Scouts*, is the right kind—it "solves" the social problem of accidents. Note also the important statement that the daily newspaper and the weekly magazine constitute the basic reading for making a citizen. Solid literature is as little esteemed by the life adjuster as solid geometry.

<sup>11</sup> A full illustration of what Payne means by "the project method of teaching" is given later in this chapter.

<sup>12</sup> Here Payne confuses us slightly by failing to remind us that the "ostensible" purpose differs from the "real" purpose. The "real" purpose is the socialized child with *fixed* responses.

subjects easy and interesting.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, the teacher who has once experienced the joy of watching children pursue some difficult piece of work with earnestness, and of observing their growth under the influence of some vital purpose, is apt to seek and make all her work conform to what is the only possible method of teaching of accident prevention. The formal teacher is sure to become less formal, and the progressive teacher will experience new means of making her schoolroom a living active world, in which the children acquire the experience of life through living; in which these experiences will be organized for the control of situations outside of the schoolroom, that the children will face in their later lives.

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That is the end of Dr. Payne's Chapter II.

A citizen may be properly mystified by the phrase "scientific, democratic instruments and methods" of teaching *fixed* behavior. The rest of Payne's book illustrates the meaning of these words. The scientific method is the "project method," and the democratic instrument is "group dynamics." The theory which Payne expounded so thoroughly in 1919 has since been elaborated and refined, but its essentials remain unchanged. The following editorial from the National Safety Council's magazine, *Safety Education*, for December, 1960, could have been written by Payne in 1919. When the citizen has read it, he will clearly understand the meaning of "project method" and "group dynamics." The editorial is headed by a cartoon of Santa pulling a bag labeled "chuck full of ideas." The ideas are addressed to school teachers and school administrators.

#### CHUCK FULL OF IDEAS

With faces all aglow, the children excitedly watched as the last

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<sup>13</sup> In this sentence resides a thought which would be wonderful if it were true. The thought, however, is the false one that if a citizen or anybody really desires to master a formal subject, astronomy for example, he can do so *easily*—all that is needed is an "impelling motive." This false notion vitiates the entire life-adjustment program. The history of mankind is a continuous illustration of the bitter fact that there is no royal road to learning. It simply is not true that "the scientific democratic instruments and methods of teaching" make "the learning of formal subjects easy and interesting."



glittering ornament was carefully hung on the classroom Christmas tree. The thrill of Christmas filled the air as each chattered happily about the ornament he had made. It was a beautiful tree.

Decorating it had been fun for the pupils and an excellent opportunity for the teacher to emphasize safety during the holidays. The class had discussed what each could do at home to prevent tragic fires started by Christmas trees. The tree, they decided, should be kept outside until time to decorate. It should be kept in water and the tree lights turned off if no one was in the room.

Preparations for the classroom Christmastime safety program began late in November. There were committees, discussions and rehearsals which created an enthusiasm that grew with each passing day.

Where can teachers get all these ideas? This year, as part of its holiday safety campaign, the National Safety Council has available a packet, designed by the Religious Activities Department to aid teachers, church leaders and clubs in setting up safety programs before the Christmas holiday season.

The kit not only has material emphasizing the greatest threats at Christmastime, but also a program for making the community aware of these dangers. There are safety tips on walking, falls, Christmas decorations, gifts and winter driving along with colorful posters for your classroom bulletin board. These materials can give you ideas for safety lessons which may prevent carelessness leading to holiday tragedy and be fun for your class as well.

Your class may wish to present a playlet such as one suggested in the kit, which described Mrs. Claus' reminders about home safety to Santa amid the preparations of Santa's Christmas Eve trip.

Or—line your classroom blackboard with pictures the students draw illustrating holiday safety—Dad shoveling the walk to prevent anyone from falling; Mom steadying the ladder while Dad puts the star on top of the tree.

Since this season is a family time—have your class develop (and use) a handy safety checklist of Christmastime hazards to watch out for.

You can get this packet, free of cost, by writing to: Religious Activities Department, National Safety Council, 425 N. Michigan Avenue, Chicago 11, Illinois. This packet is only part of the Council's holiday safety program. News releases covering fires,

toy safety, drying up the Christmas office party, moral aspects of driving and seat belts—the ideal gift for the man who has everything—are being sent to newspapers throughout the country.

The lofty idealism of the life adjuster has proved itself to be a deadly mistake in three important ways. The history of safety education as a part of the regular curriculum of the public schools has failed to produce the socialized adolescent immunized against avoidable accidents. The statistics for the age group 16–20 prove that. On the physical side, the life adjusters after experimenting for forty years with the safety soul-set can only report “No progress.” On the social side, where the life adjuster has similarly experimented with adaptation to environment, he can report the same. The ethical and moral superiority which he promised in 1919 is not evident in the social scene today as that scene is reflected by the ethics of business, of labor, of politics, and the ethical complexion of all of us. Most of us, when we honestly ask ourselves whether the ennobling process to which most of us have been subjected has really ennobled us, have to confess that this enrichment of the curriculum has not led to a parallel enrichment of our lives.

But the deadliest aspect of the life adjuster’s idealism is that in his eagerness to produce the ethically ennobled future citizen he has been compelled to downgrade his intellectual health. In this he has succeeded so well that zestful zeal for intellectual excellence among adolescents and among us, their parents, is well-nigh absent. The life adjusters promised us a child who would “pursue his work with vigor and earnestness,” and presumably an intellectual renaissance would follow as the love of learning became more intense. Instead, the public school system degenerated to the point where today the federal government feels compelled to prime the educational pump. Such apathy suggests that the life adjuster failed to communicate to those whom he adjusted a genuine reverence for learning, wisdom, and healthy intellects. For this reason alone, the citizen is justified in viewing the life-adjustment system of education as a deadly mistake. It appears to have killed the love of learning. The profession of teaching sank so low in public esteem that in 1959 propaganda was undertaken to raise it, and President Eisenhower begged the nation to celebrate “Honor Teachers Week.”

### CHAPTER III

## *The Be-Careful Philosophy: The Mystique of Safety*

PAYNE AND Whitney saw eye to eye on one major point: they thought that a new race of human beings could be created by the scientific democratic instruments and methods of life adjustment of the whole child, with life-adjustment teachers operating a life-adjustment curriculum. Payne, however, was primarily interested in technique and method. He saw in the project method the instrument by which plastic, impressionable youth could be processed into any shape the processors desired. To Payne the good be-careful attitude was but one of many good attitudes, good feelings, and good sentiments that must be infused into youth by innumerable projects, each designed to promote some attitude or feeling or sentiment.

But as Whitney became more and more absorbed in this large knotty problem, accident prevention or safety loomed up in his mind in ever larger proportions. As it grew, it began to assume the size of a great cloud or umbrella overreaching the earth. To Payne, the one thing necessary was the perfection of the machine for the production of the perfectly socialized citizen. But to Whitney the one thing necessary was the right idea, the true concept of safety. In consequence, the two men slowly grew apart—Payne to continue his propaganda for improving the life-adjustment machine; Whitney to develop and sell his propaganda for a cult of safety. Payne looked at safety education as a major device for destroying the unsocialized curriculum; Whitney came to look at it as a semi-religious culture, an instrument for indoctrinating everybody with a philosophy of the truly abundant life.

Albert W. Whitney appears to have had no formal training in linguistics, ethics, philosophy, or logic. He had absorbed the theories of John Dewey and frequently repeats the popular

Deweyisms of the day. But the names of the master minds of all time rarely or never adorn his writings. Aristotle and Plato among the pagans, St. John and St. Thomas Aquinas among the Christians, appear to have made no impression on him. Therefore, if the philosophy of Safety seems to the citizen to be pretty farfetched and silly, it is so because its author was unable to criticize himself by checking his private thoughts against those of the superior minds of other ages. His training in linguistics was so weak that he confused myths with scientific fact, as we shall shortly see. Yet his unsystematic thoughts about accident prevention have been made by his followers into what is called "the basic philosophy of Safety," and this "basic philosophy" is now taught to prospective teachers of safety and to their students in all states and in almost all public schools. Otherwise the author would spare the citizen the pain of reading about it.

After Whitney's death in 1943 he was memorialized in a eulogistic biography, *Safety for Greater Adventures*. The title is well chosen, because the myth of the Greater Adventure is the central feature of his so-called philosophy. Here Whitney carries the theory of the life adjuster one step farther. The adjuster talked loosely about processing *right* attitudes, feelings, sentiments into youth, but he failed to specify which attitudes, feelings, sentiments were cardinal and which were unimportant. Whitney saw in the word "safety" a term that might be built up into a master word, a word having such a large, deep, rich meaning as to cause people to revere it. Somehow or other the word must be made to shine and sparkle in men's minds to create the yearning for the superiority which it symbolized. If the word could be equated with such a phrase as "the more abundant life" or "the pursuit of happiness" or "liberty" it would be a wonder worker, he thought. He therefore set about glorifying safety. To do so he invented the mystique or cult of Salvation by Safety.

His problem, as he apparently realized from the beginning, was to create a myth and to sell it to everybody. His method was the standardized method of salesmanship, advertising, and propaganda; a favorable image (idol) is to be implanted in men's minds by personifying an abstraction such as "Cars love Shell" or "Safety loves mankind." Whitney left no autobiographi-



cal record of how he upgraded safety and conducted a campaign to glorify it, nor did he write a treatise. But he left behind numerous scattered writings from which his followers have built up a "theology" of safety. A citizen is compelled to dig among these scattered documents to see for himself the myth-making process at work.

When Whitney first encountered the word "safety" it meant physical safety. The word for spiritual safety was "salvation." His job, therefore, was to add the thought embodied in the term "salvation" to the term "safety." If he could get people to rid their minds of "safety" written without a capital letter, and get them to see the word written either with the capital S or wholly capitalized as SAFETY, then he would know that they had been converted. He appears to have developed his thought in a series of steps as follows:

1. To prevent the debasement of the idea of safety by associating it with physical safety he removed the word "first" from the slogan "Safety first." Such a term was good enough for factories but not good enough for the new cult.
2. He endowed the word with positive powers by a delightful quibble: the negative phrase "safe *from* danger" is always to be balanced by the positive phrase "safe *for* the greater adventure."
3. He elevated its meaning by attributing to it the mystic power of destroying evil and creating good.
4. He enlarged its range and universalized it by insisting that it was the instrument by which the whole human race would be made safe or would be saved or would save itself or would experience salvation.
5. He made it seem scientific: it symbolized an alleged technique for removing mischance or misfortune from human life.
6. He expressed the whole dogmatically, to assure mankind that the way to salvation had been found, that the ultimate adjustment essential to salvation was the safety soul-set.

Now let us examine in detail this Glorification Process.

STEP 1. *Removing the Stigma of the Physical.* The safety movement began with industrial safety, had the name Safety First Movement, and worked chiefly to provide mechanical devices to prevent accidents. Today the more automatic the

factory the fewer the accidents, and much of what we call automation arose out of industrial safety, through the invention of devices that enabled the workman to stay farther away from the machine. This kind of protection was negative; it was protection against danger. It had no power to spiritualize or ennoble, and therefore it was not what Whitney called a "positive force," a spiritual power. He frequently refers to the need for never using the word "first" because of its ignoble association with the merely physical. Physical safety is not the prime aspect of Safety; it is the lowly prerequisite to the "more fundamental and cultural values"—"love, honor, faith, patriotism and many another equally glorious" value. No child is to be taught that physical safety comes ahead of spiritual. All children are to be taught that physical safety is a prerequisite to the "greater adventure."

STEP 2. *Endowing the Word With Positive Attributes.* The public concept of safety is the essentially negative one of lessening or removing dangers or risks; but if we are to spell the word with a capital letter, it must stand for something positive, something we can reach up our arms *for*, pray *for*. Out of this thought rose Whitney's famous safety-from and safety-for myth. In relating it, he becomes almost lyrical. Deep within the heart of Safety lie the richest of rewards for those who worship her properly. She is the most beneficent of goddesses, for as with one hand she withdraws the danger, with the other hand she bestows the reward. The loss is the bad and the evil; the gain is the good, the abundant life. Safety symbolizes a "two-faced idea"—safety from evil and for good. Again and again Whitney quotes President Wilson's "To make the world safe *for* democracy," which is the positive expression of the negative "To make the world safe *from* autocracy."

The word *safety* [he writes] is incomplete by itself and must be used with a preposition. The obvious preposition is *from*. But this does not help matters, for to be safe *from* something is still negative; it is an avoidance, an inhibition. But there is another preposition that can be used equally well, namely, *for*. And here the difficulty begins to disappear, for *safety for* is distinctly positive. *Safety from* leaves a vacancy, but this vacancy is filled by *safety for*. Nature abhors a vacuum, and so it appears does

thought and language. Safety, then, instead of being inhibitory, is in reality substitutional. It throws something out but it puts something else in its place.

The unreal, trancelike quality of this passage illustrates the meaning of the word "mystique." Every sentence in it is wholly or partly false,<sup>1</sup> and yet this idea is taught to prospective teachers as if it were true. A mysterious something has entranced Whitney, and that something is the word "safe"; he appears to be suffering from a compulsion to find in it a golden message.

STEP 3. *Glorification by the Better Adventure.* The next step in the process of throwing a veil of glorified meanings over the symbol *Safety* was to associate it with the thrilling life. Youth in particular is not easily tempted to play safe. Hence comes the need to bait the safety hook with the better or greater adventure. The positive "force" with which Whitney energized the word becomes more energetic when he attaches the greater thrill, the nobler adventure. Here again the mystique of Safety makes itself felt. By some occult process, which Whitney never describes, the human being who has acquired the safety soul-set is free to make the choice between good and evil, between the mean, low adventure and the high, noble one. The negative

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<sup>1</sup> The falseness in each sentence is easily recognized:

SENTENCE 1. The word "safe" is as complete by itself as any other single word is, and it does not need to be used with a preposition. Example: "I am safe."

SENTENCE 2. There is no obvious preposition to use with "safe." "The runner is safe *at* first" shows that *at* is as common as *from*.

SENTENCE 3. To be safe from something does not necessarily involve negation. To be safe from one's enemies is not "negative" or "inhibitory" nor does it imply "avoidance."

SENTENCE 4. There are many prepositions that can be used equally well.

SENTENCE 5. The words "safety for" are not necessarily positive as in the sentence "What is *safety for* me is danger for him."

SENTENCE 6. *Safety from* leaves no vacancy and hence *safety for* cannot fill it.

SENTENCE 7. Nature abhors neither vacuums nor spaces; men may abhor the vacuum, but neither thought nor language can.

SENTENCES 8 AND 9. These record the high point of Whitney's mystical experience with safety. Safety has become a beneficent goddess who throws out the negative bad and puts in the positive good.

power of Safety enables one to throw out the evil; the positive power enables one to bring in the good. Whitney writes:

What is thrown out and what is put in its place? Well, that is up to you. *You* may say what safety shall mean for you. What do you choose to have thrown out of your life and what do you choose to have put in its place? As for me, I choose adventure. I choose to have the bad adventure thrown out and the good adventure brought in, and, because I believe that adventure is in truth the deep, significant value in life, by that token I believe that we have the real meaning of safety.<sup>2</sup>

To know the good adventure from the bad adventure . . . is the height of both worldly and other worldly wisdom.<sup>3</sup>

These questions of choice and relative values, while they may be encountered on the lowest plane of physical safety, may be carried with no change in fundamental manner of approach to as high a place as we [life adjusters] please. For we have not merely personal safety but the safety of society to consider, and not merely physical safety but moral safety as well. For instance, the problem of safety in the field of love may be approached by exactly the same method as the problem of physical safety. The adventure of love is evidently a part of the world order, and the real problem of safety in this field is therefore not an inhibition upon love, but a choice between the good love adventure and the bad love adventure.<sup>4</sup>

Again the mystique has soared into the realm of "worldly and other-worldly wisdom" without explaining the technique for adjusting youth to the choice of the good love adventure rather than the bad one. It is at this point that the average citizen asks: What is the difference between safety as sponsored by the National Safety Council and salvation as sponsored by the Christian Church?

STEP 4. *The Universalization of Safety.* The purpose of Safety for each human being is realized in the thrilling noble adventure, and the man of the future will have more and more of them as Safety vitalizes existence. This is *safety* for the life abundant.

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<sup>2</sup> *Safety for Greater Adventures*, p. 46.

<sup>3</sup> *Eighteenth Yearbook*, A.A.S.A., p. 20.

<sup>4</sup> *Twenty-fifth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education*, Part I, p. 334.



The purpose of Safety for mankind from pole to pole is the realization of the world order. The soul of man ascends from physical safety to moral safety and from moral to social or universal Safety. The accident of war is a particularly dangerous accident and must be removed from the human scene. It represents a serious social maladjustment. Whitney admits that this is a difficult problem, but the scientific approach to safety will solve it if we have the right attitude. What we must do is to apply safety principles to produce a controlled environment all around the world. When everybody has the safety soul-set both in the inner relations of himself to himself and in the outer relations of himself to his world, there will be no more maladjustments and no more avoidable accidents, for the right application of the laws of the science of safety will produce the kind of world that men have dreamed about, have hoped for, but have never attained. Thus safety education and driver education are of primary importance and of fundamental academic excellence, because of the universal world order they have in view.

The idea of a safe world has great emotional value, great propaganda power, and offers a fine approach to the next step, which is that showing how "scientific" this idea is.

STEP 5. *Adding a Scientific Tincture.* Few modern propaganda efforts thrive unless supported by some science, real or alleged. Whitney turned first to biology, then to psychology, to find the ingredients of the social science that is the present basis of safety education. From biology he borrowed the evolutionary hypothesis of Charles Darwin. "The survival of the fit was the survival of the safe," according to Whitney's version. And he goes on to point out how man can now control his own destiny by doing for himself what "nature" used to do: select the fit and reject the unfit. A study of biology reveals who are fit and a study of psychology reveals how to remake the unfit by curing them of their maladjustments. The new social science is the science of the controlled world wherein chance and luck and accident are permitted to play no part. "A purposeful life," says Whitney, "in a controlled world is now possible as never before." Formerly we had the will or desire for such a life but not the scientific technique for making it possible; today we have the technique but not enough will or desire. But—

. . . Now we are coming into the plenitude of our powers . . . Under the new order [of life adjustment] there is not only no place for war but no place for accidents. War destroys and wastes by intention; accident destroys and wastes by mischance. Under the old mechanism for making progress [natural evolution], chance had a legitimate and necessary place, for progress depended upon the existence of chance variations. . . But when the seat of progress was transferred to the inner world [of scientific life adjustment] the place of chance was enormously curtailed. Variations are now not left to chance but purposely originated.<sup>5</sup>

An editorial in Whitney's magazine *Safety Education* for October, 1925, reads in part as follows:

As soon as we [life adjusters] shall see clearly what the problem really is and its importance, there is no reason why we should not produce a generation which will possess the attitudes of mind which will make it possible to survive even on our modern highways. Stranger accommodations have been made in nature even by the use of such a crude method as the survival of the fittest. The survival of the fittest is still operating, for some of the worst drivers are being killed off even before they have left descendants. . . .

The editorial goes on to suggest that we have good reason to hope that "intelligence" will soon solve the problem because "three committees of the Psychological Division of the National Research Council are similarly working at the traffic problem."

According to Whitney the psychological discovery that "accidents do not happen; they are caused" enables us now to shape the future by studying the causes of accidents and by removing them. Human misbehavior, human frailty, human ignorance, human laziness all cause accidents. Remove them and accidents cease. The problem is the technical one of getting them out. When all the causes of accidents have been discovered and when they have been removed, the accident problem will have been solved. In driver education, for example, the problem according to a contemporary writer is "to redesign the nut behind the wheel." The process of redesigning is the process of

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<sup>5</sup> *Safety for Greater Adventures*, p. 56.

removing from the nut the loose attitudes which cause the wheel to wobble and the car to veer. These are recklessness, inattention, absent-mindedness, drowsiness, fatigue, acidity, envy, jealousy, anger, drunkenness, avarice, pride, sloth, fear, timidity, and the various complexes which arise out of male-female relationships. All these represent wrong attitudes, wrong soul-sets; and as Whitney says, safety education "depends on the development of the right emotionalized attitudes both for immediate and ultimate protection."<sup>6</sup>

STEP 6. *The Dogma*. The keystone which sets the other stones of a philosophic arch is a central dogma or basic assumption. In Whitney's enlargement of the be-careful philosophy this dogma resides in the startling sentence: "Accidents do not happen: they are caused." To believe that chance and luck are parts of human life is to be unscientific and superstitious, he dogmatically asserted. In former times when people were ignorant, they believed that "accidents will happen"; but in modern times, "man in the plenitude of his powers" knows better.

Furthermore, the superstition that chance and luck both good and bad are real aspects of life produces complacency or cultural lag. But if all youth is taught the true dogma, "Accidents do not happen: they are caused," youth will cease to be superstitious, will lose its complacency, and this truth will free both boys and girls from accidents by causing them to make the right choice.

For now at long last we have the power to make a new choice: we may choose the no-accident, adventurous life or the accident-full, chancy life. Whitney's favorite quotation from *Adventure: A Pageant Drama of Life and Chance*, by Thomas Wood Stevens, concludes with the lines:

. . . Chance is not supreme  
However man be bounded by himself.  
Life may be moulded—taken warm and young;  
Life may be shaped to new endurances.  
Fate leaves the choice to us . . . Shall we choose chance,  
Or visioning farther, stanch her bleeding stroke,  
Take knowledge for our guide, and give the race,  
Far in the future, deeper potencies?

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<sup>6</sup> *Safety for Greater Adventures*, p. 51.

With this dogma Whitney wheels his thought full circle. We are to believe that we now have the technique for choosing the right chance against the mischance, the good instead of the evil, the right instead of the wrong, the ennobling love adventure, not the ignoble, degrading one. And with this knowledge for our guide we can give to the race the deeper potency of the accident-free, abundantly spiritualized life.

As suggested earlier in the chapter, Whitney would not have fallen into this maze of errors had he known about safety education in earlier times. The Greek scientist Aristotle established the science of safety as a branch of ethics in the fifth century before Christ. In the sixth book of his *Nicomachean Ethics* he explains the nature of the great virtue of prudence, or foresightedness or practical wisdom or sagacity. This master virtue for the abundantly disciplined daily life appears to be what Whitney was fumbling for. Had he but known that the Greek had done with logic and without passion what he is endeavoring to do with passion and without logic, the product would have helped instead of hindered modern American education. Aristotle's version of safety education is infinitely deeper and nobler than the same thing as envisioned by Whitney. Hence in terms of ethical progress, in terms of the progressive development of the science of ethics, Whitney and the life adjusters have turned back the hands of the clock by more than two thousand years. A little book (1959) by Josef Pieper called *Prudence: The First Cardinal Virtue* (97 pages) has more to say about the essence of safety as a spiritual fact than is to be found in the thousands of pages stemming from Whitney's mystique.

Thus Whitney and the life adjusters have fostered retrogression by introducing a new and confusing term, "safety," for an old profound one, "prudence." Physical safety is one thing; spiritual safety another. As will be seen in the chapter on "Driver Training Versus Driver Education," the first is a small, practical, definite, little science; the second vague, amorphous, obscure. The techniques for physical safety are well known and practical; the techniques for spiritual safety are not, except in countries that practice the science of brain-washing all their citizens.



## CHAPTER IV

# *Another Social Science Is Prepared for Market: Driver Education*

BY THE middle thirties, the highway death toll was such as to give everybody pause. A powerfully written horror story from real life, "And Sudden Death," by J. C. Furnas, published in *The Reader's Digest*, presented the daily bloodletting on the open road in such vivid images as quivering brains coming to rest, arms and legs scattered miscellaneously, torsos without heads and heads without torsos. The Battle of Gettysburg produced no such complete distortions of the human figure, and death by rifle bullets seems clean and wholesome by contrast. What coroners, undertakers, policemen, and doctors knew all too well, the public now knew as never before. When a cross-country sampling of our one hundred daily dead is realistically written up, the result is rightly captioned AND SUDDEN DEATH. Such a cold, biting, accurate rendering of the ugly fact did much to add impetus to the safety movement.

The National Safety Council had not been wringing its hands helplessly. All over the country it was assisting cities and communities to organize safety councils and to promote the use of such protective instruments as red, yellow, and green traffic lights, stop streets, pedestrian crosswalks, plus the hundred and one technical devices which assist the flow of traffic in city streets and across country. New local, state, and national organizations had sprung up or were springing up; and safety parades and campaigns of many types gained in popularity. The council found itself increasingly involved in what became loosely organized, specialized little safety movements: patriotic groups like the American Legion, civic ones like the Junior Chamber of

Commerce, cultural like the Federation of Women's Clubs, commercial like the American Automobile Association, professional like the American Medical Association, industrial like the Automobile Manufacturers Association, educational like the Congress of Parents and Teachers, political like the Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators, and countless others. All these put on programs and conducted propagandas inspired by or connected with the council itself.

In 1935 the council established a five-year plan to reduce traffic deaths by 7 per cent a year, using every available agency throughout the country. Their Resolution outlines the council's problem so clearly that it is reproduced in full.<sup>1</sup>

In 1923, the council thought that the safety soul-set infused in the elementary school would last for life:

There must be a kind of flavor of safety through all of the school work, just as there is a flavor of honesty, of good manners, a flavor of doing the right thing, the loyal, patriotic thing, a reverence to old people, to parents and so on. That need not be confined to the English teaching. Of course, it is evident how that can be, and we can write essays on safety and we can give safety plays, and we can do things of that sort; but there can be in every endeavor in school some reference to safety, so that after a while the child gets dyed with that. And when he goes out of school he thinks of safety not in a gloomy mournful way, but he just thinks of it—just as he thinks of supper about supper time.<sup>2</sup>

By 1935 the council had discovered that the dye was superficial and that it washed away without penetrating to the vital organs.

It is therefore not to be wondered at that the council felt desperate and that its Educational Section did an about-face and decided to invent a social science which would theoretically do what so badly needed to be done. The earlier theory of

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<sup>1</sup> The degree of failure of this campaign can be measured as follows: The council hoped to reduce deaths from the 1935 figure of 37,000 to the figure of 24,150 in 1940. But in 1940, the council's figures show 34,501 killed. The campaign missed its goal by 10,351 dead men, women, and children. In 1941 deaths totaled 39,969, and five years of campaigning showed a net loss of about 2,969 dead.

<sup>2</sup> *Proceedings*, 1923, p. 323.

# Resolution

Whereas, reckless speed, carelessness, and intoxication of both motorists and pedestrians are among the major factors that threaten to set, for 1936, a new all-time high of persons killed in traffic accidents eclipsing even the record of 37,000 dead in 1935; and

Whereas, while it is true that there has been during 1936 a marked increase in gasoline consumption, which means a decrease in deaths relative to automobile mileage, we recognize that no excuse can be accepted for conditions and practices that produce an ever-increasing toll of lives, and

Whereas, the National Safety Council is entering the second year of its Five-Year Campaign to reduce traffic accident deaths throughout the country 35 per cent by the end of 1940, and has helped and encouraged intelligent organization for safety in all 48 states and the District of Columbia, and in hundreds of local communities within the states, through its field forces and the complete facilities of its engineering, educational, editorial and statistical services; and

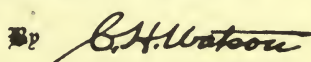
Whereas, while we recognize the urgent need for improvement of our highway systems and our enforcement programs, we know that greater carefulness of drivers and pedestrians would promptly and drastically reduce the traffic toll;

Therefore be it Resolved, that the National Safety Council does solemnly call upon the millions of persons using the streets and highways of America to accept their personal obligations in this matter, to the end that the phrase, "Drive carefully and walk safely," may become not merely a slogan but an effective reality; and

Be it Further Resolved, that the National Safety Council continue all its varied activities in furtherance of the cause of highway safety during the coming year; that it intensify and expand every effort already undertaken in its Five-Year Campaign so that 1937 will bring to society a richly deserved reward of thousands of men, women and children spared from accidents or untimely death.

The National Safety Council

By   
Managing Director

By   
President

(Passed unanimously by the members of the Executive Committee of the National Safety Council at their regular meeting, held in New York City, Monday, December 14, 1936.)

life adjustment had been that of eliminating the organized, rigid, formal subject-matter sciences and replacing them with flexible "projects" or minor sciences which could be changed daily or even hourly as the environment changed. To put the principles of safety between the stiff covers of a book would destroy the whole structure because, according to the theory, the scientific development of an attitude is a process, a technique, not a set of principles which, as in the little science of multiplication, can be memorized and used thereafter automatically. Nevertheless, the council about-faced and proceeded first to invent a second social science of safety and next to install it in the high schools across the nation.

No one can blame the council for grasping at straws. The life-adjustment program had produced no tangible results. Although deaths among elementary school children were steadily going down, no one really knew whether the children were saving themselves because their souls had been rightly adjusted at school or because they were receiving more protection from school patrols, parental patrols, traffic police, new laws, new ordinances, and a widespread public concern for their safety. One thing only was sure: The decline in deaths among elementary school children was more than offset by increased fatalities to adolescents. Among adolescent males 14 to 25 years old the death rate was and is the highest in the nation. The council hoped that a second social science might bring everything into focus, and the double exposure of adolescents might produce the desired type of mature citizen. The scattered multiple emphasis on safety distributed throughout the twelve grades and hitting the student from all angles would be followed by a second concentrated sustained attack. Twelve years of miscellaneous indirect safety plus a semester of scientific direct safety should surely produce the safety soul-set, would surely make adolescents hunger for safety as they hunger for supper.

In addition to the rising tide of deaths and accidents, other forces spurred the council on. Numerous books and pamphlets undertook to explain the theory of safe driving. *A Bibliography on Highway Safety* (1938) lists 1,376 articles. Private driving schools in cities trained prospective drivers. A few public schools were experimenting with driving courses. One experiment more



than any other encouraged the belief that a new science was in the making. A young professor of the industrial arts at Pennsylvania State College, Amos E. Neyhart, had used his own car to train high school students. The results were thought to be spectacular. A check-up three years later was reported as showing not a fender scratched, not a body bumped. A new slogan, "It can be done," began to echo in convention halls.

To the *National Parent-Teachers Magazine* for April, 1936, Whitney contributed an article, "Educating the Young Driver." In it he wrote, "Up to date Professor Neyhart has trained eighty-seven young people. He thinks that they must have, on the average, an individual driving experience of twenty thousand miles; yet not one of them has up to the present time even so much as dented a fender. Professor Neyhart seems to have done what he undertook to do; he is actually producing a new race of drivers."

As every citizen now knows, it is easy these days to invent a social science. In the natural sciences the going is tough. There, when a physicist meets an astronomer, the product in fifty or a hundred years is astrophysics, if a mathematician like Einstein shows up to provide the key equation. But when a life adjuster from the social science of education meets a life adjuster from the social science of insurance, the product in a couple of years may be a social science like driver education. Whitney masterminded the new science and was its angel. For the purpose of preparing a safety textbook he first assembled an Advisory Council of prominent life adjusters like Willard W. Beatty, president of the Progressive Education Association; John Dewey's disciple, Professor Harold Rugg, of Teachers College, Columbia; Agnes Samuelson, president of the National Education Association; and others of similar eminence. With this group to give prestige to the new science, less well-known psychologists and life adjusters were hired to do the actual writing. Whitney personally edited the whole, wrote the preface, the introduction and the last chapter, entitled "The Millennium." The textbook was named *Man and the Motor Car*. It was first marketed in 1936.

The new science promised immunity against accidents by developing "a sixth sense." As the book (p. 62) words it: "Care-

ful training and a constant effort to improve his skill will produce a driver whose good habits will make him able to operate his car without scraping a fender under even the most difficult and trying conditions. Such a driver acquires a sixth sense which keeps him out of trouble."

Whitney's text was the first to appear as a single book. The American Automobile Association was also busy at this time shaping its version of the new science. The association first published it in a series of pamphlets which were later brought together in the text *Sportsmanlike Driving*. The two texts were instantly popular. *Man and the Motor Car* had three printings in seven months—because the propaganda of the council and of the association went everywhere, and thus the announcement that a new science had been built reached almost everyone. As with the social science popularized in the *Power of Positive Thinking*, the appeal was great.

A science which "redesigns the nut behind the wheel" and which produces a new species of *Homo sapiens* has great potential selling power. Parents love the promise of the safe child, communities love the idea of hospitals emptied of maimed and injured, politicians rejoice at the idea of large economic savings, automobile makers and insurance companies envisage a vast expansion in the adolescent market, and good people everywhere give thanks that a way has been found to make youth virtuous. *Man and the Motor Car* is now in its sixth edition. The fifth edition in 1954 "provides a dynamic guide to experience in safety for greater driving adventures . . . through a learning-by-doing approach" (p. vi). The promise of the sixth edition in 1959 is somewhat more restrained; "If this text is used properly, it *will* make you a better driver, it *can* help you to have more interesting adventures, and it *may* save your life" (p. vi).

Many life adjusters rejoiced at this addition of a new medium for more complete adolescent adaptation to environment. It introduced the first rolling classroom, a mobile textbook in modern life. In a car an enormous amount of vital living can be done. If education is to be kept close to the throbbing heart of life itself, here was the ideal classroom, a place where teacher and pupil could really commune, could establish those intimate,

informal relationships so essential in adjusting the embryonic citizen. Here was the perfect place for instilling confidence and poise in the timid girl and for reducing the self-assurance of the insolent boy. The subdued interior of the auto bore many resemblances to the psychiatric couch, for here the teacher studied the maladjustments of youth and gave the appropriate guidance and counseling. Here confidences could be exchanged, weaknesses in character revealed, and the need for the elimination of vices expounded.<sup>3</sup> Youth, "young and plastic," could here be brought to quick maturity, because youth's desire for the joyous and thrilling adventure is so intense as to make easy the molding, shaping, maturing process. From out these soft, rolling classrooms would emerge a ceaseless stream of safe drivers and responsible citizens. The future had, indeed, a rosy glow.

One lone figure saw no such gleam upon the horizon. Dean E. George Payne saw in the new science and the new-style classroom not a genuine science but a propaganda stunt. It seemed to him that industry, commerce, and insurance were stealing the show and that so profound a matter as the education of the nation should not be taken over by the American businessman. The American Automobile Association was beginning to compete with the Educational Section of the National Safety Council for the public ear on matters of education for safety, and the Automobile Manufacturers Association was beginning to look at public education more closely. To Payne

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<sup>3</sup> This idea is still held, as follows: "If trained and able, the teacher can establish in a few hours frank and easy communication with each student and gain an understanding of the youth which might take months under less fertile circumstances.

"But such talent in counseling and guidance seldom comes naturally. There are established techniques for developing rapport and creating an atmosphere of trust and confidence. Symptoms of behavior problems are apparent only if recognized as such.

"So teachers seeking a career in driver education must know various aspects of psychology, including guidance, mental health of children, social and emotional adjustment, the peculiar problems of adolescence and the sign posts of normal as well as delinquent behavior." (*Motor News*, March, 1961, p. 25.)

the idea of cooking up a new social science in a couple of years and of serving it to the public as the cure-all for a public ill seemed to be a quickie operation.

In September, 1937, in an article, "Contemporary Accidents and their Non-reduction," Payne wrote:

I am fully aware of the work of the National Safety Council, the various local safety councils, and the numerous public officials who continued through these years [1907-37] to hold congresses and conferences, to publicize statistics, to pass ordinances, and to promote educational programs designed to indoctrinate youth and the public in the ways of safety. The relative futility of these efforts in the face of constantly mounting accidents and hazards lies mainly, not in the lack of concern about the accident problem, but in the lack of intelligent attack upon the problem of accidents and the method of their prevention. The leadership of the safety movement is now and has been for a long time in the hands of an agency which has the appearance of a professional society or public-service agency. It is actually more nearly a trade association primarily interested in saving money for its members and incidentally in saving human lives.<sup>4</sup>

A few pages later he adds: "There is at present very little if any altruistic or even wholly objective leadership in the movement for accident prevention in the United States," and on page 25 he wrote: "The present agencies for promoting accident prevention programs . . . are essentially propaganda and not scientific organizations."

Payne's sharpest thrust is at Whitney's new science and its text, *Man and the Motor Car*. Payne wrote (p. 24):

A recent program promoted by the National Bureau of Casualty and Surety Underwriters illustrates the point of view presented here; namely the proposal to train high-school students in safe driving. This is the latest proposal and one that has received its due amount of publicity. Even if a program of safe driving could be carried out in all the high schools of America . . . we would deal only with a limited number of the future drivers, and, so far as we know, those who would drive safely anyway. The program is an interesting publicity stunt, and bears no essential relation to the accident situation in the United States in the

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<sup>4</sup> *Journal of Educational Sociology*, Sept., 1937, p. 21.



year 1937. Moreover, it will likely retard the development of a program which would get at the roots of the accident situation.

Since Payne's attack was leveled chiefly at the Education Section of the council, Whitney replied in the December, 1937, issue of the same *Journal of Educational Sociology*. To Payne's charge that the Education Section was essentially not scientific but propagandistic, Whitney answered:

It is true that the promotion of safety education has up to the present time been largely in the hands of pressure groups outside of education itself; but the same thing has been true in practically every other new [life-adjustment] educational movement; for instance, in health education, vocational education, and education in household arts. Even if educators were the most intelligent people in the world, they would have neither the means nor the time to develop the public interest and support that is necessary if a new movement is to be a success.<sup>5</sup>

The Payne-Whitney quarrel has its amusing side, for Payne, inventor of the social science of safety education, is now chiding Whitney and his associates for inventing another similar social science called driver education. But the issue is by no means amusing. It appears that the scales had fallen from Dean Payne's eyes: he now saw that if one institution, education, calls upon another institution, commerce, for assistance, the stronger of the two will control or absorb the weaker. The real, profound issue is whether education has integrity of its own. The matter may well be illustrated by comparison with the institution of the law. Our public courts are dedicated to justice. As soon as these courts begin making judgments in political terms favorable to Democrats or to Republicans, they will become corrupt in the same way that Russian courts are corrupt. The law will have lost its integrity. Our public schools ought to be dedicated to the intellectual health of the nation in the same way that the courts ought to be dedicated to justice for all. Otherwise the inner integrity, the basic independence, of the court or the school is lost.

Payne's cause was already lost before he realized that when he and his fellow life adjusters turned for aid to commerce and

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<sup>5</sup> *Journal of Educational Sociology*, Dec., 1937, p. 197.

industry, they were asking for that which they could not control and which would seize power from them. His fellow life adjusters continued to be delighted to serve the new master and to throw their influence toward the conversion of education from an independent institution with its own marvelous integrity into a branch or department of a larger, more powerful institution, commerce. For example, on October 24, 1935, Dr. Herbert J. Stack, a prominent life adjuster, said to the Eastern Conference of Motor Vehicle Commissioners meeting in New York City, "The high schools . . . are now recognizing their responsibility. They are seeing that it is much more important to teach a youngster good driving than it is to teach him to read French or Spanish, translate Caesar, or to solve problems in solid geometry." As one can see, this is strictly a commercial point of view, the point of view of the industries concerned with petroleum, tires, accessories, car makers, new-car dealers, old-car dealers, insurance, organized touring, traveling, and moteling, asphalt and cement.

The statement about the superiority of good driving to good mathematics is representative of the life adjuster. With the aid of gigantic commercially inspired propaganda, he sold this idea to almost everyone. But in the quieter realms of actual practice a quite different science developed. The existence of two sciences is not commonly known, nor has the conflict between them received its due publicity. In the main the citizen is offered a choice between the educated driver and the untrained driver—a choice that is no choice at all.

The next chapter describes these two sciences by comparing them and points out that a real choice exists—the choice between an educated driver and a trained driver. (The story of the rise and growth of the commercial propaganda to force "the high schools to realize their responsibility" will be given in a later chapter.)



## CHAPTER V

# *Driver Training Versus Driver Education*

MOST CITIZENS are singularly confused over the difference in meaning of the terms "driver education" and "driver training." If asked to distinguish between an educated driver and a trained one, many would stutter, then say that they saw no difference. Journalists and radio announcers use the two words in the same report as if they meant the same thing. In consequence, the citizens, whether they act in their capacity as parents of adolescents or as legislators, city, state, or federal, or as members of boards of education, usually vote in ignorance on the supposition that a vote for driver education is a vote for driver training. Yet the two differ fundamentally in method and in teaching. Although both aim at the same target, their methods for scoring bull's-eyes differ as shooting a machine gun differs from shooting a telescopic rifle. In the first you spray the target and hope for a hit; in the second you focus the cross hairs and center the shot. Driver education—spiritual, theoretical, academic—begins with the assumption that the student is ignorant of cars, traffic problems, and human nature. Driver training, physical, practical, unacademic, begins with the assumption that the student already knows much and should be trained or "habituated" to use that much well.

The issue needs to be clarified now because many millions of dollars are annually poured into driver education; special subsidies from numerous sources come to it; powerful lobbies in Washington ask for special grants; similar lobbies in every state turn the heat on legislatures for special tax levies; pressure groups in cities request handsome appropriations in school budgets. So powerful and omnipresent is the cry of the driver educator that the subdued voice of the driver trainer is rarely heard in the land. Why the propaganda for driver education is so

great and so noisy is the subject of a later chapter. The purpose of this chapter is to point out that two radically different approaches to the problem exist, and that the second one is probably superior to the first. The initial question to be answered is that of the general difference between the two.

The science of driver education is based on the theory that good people don't have accidents and that bad people do. It is what is called an ethical or moral science. Accidents are caused by bad people being bad, and safety is created by good people being good. Those who have right attitudes live safely and usually die of old age; those with wrong attitudes live recklessly and often die prematurely. A few accidents are unavoidable, as when an avalanche sweeps skiers into a canyon, but 80 or 90 per cent of what are called accidents allegedly stem from wrong attitudes. A scientific study of these wrong attitudes reveals the right ones, and all that remains to be done is to cultivate these. "You can train a chimpanzee to drive but you cannot teach him to drive philanthropically." By contrast with the inhuman chimp, the philanthropic driver drives with love of mankind in his heart. Safe driving allegedly illustrates a person's charity, benevolence, and good will toward everybody. It represents the high-water mark of civilization, for it symbolizes the co-operative, noncompetitive spirit. A spiritually educated driver never contests the right of way but yields it humbly. A good teacher can so humiliate a youth in thirty class recitations plus six hours of illustrative practice as to render him "safe" thereafter. The primary problem is a problem of soul, of right attitude.

By contrast, driver training aims at no such ethereal culmination. It is a practical science and has one clearly limited purpose: the safe transportation of men and materials from one spot to another. Its aim is to train the eye to see the whole traffic picture, to discipline the hand to steer and the foot to accelerate, decelerate, and brake as the traffic picture opens up or closes in. Thus the taxi driver who delivers his load as required by this small science is not to be praised for his virtue and civic nobility but for doing his little job scientifically. The problem is regarded by the driver trainer as a problem not of soul but of sense. The right use of the five senses, particularly the sense of

eyesight, suffices; the sixth or soulful sense may be a wonderful thing to have, but many "safe" drivers don't have it.

A second general difference is in method. The science of driver education uses the indirect approach on the theory that the safety soul-set cannot be developed directly. The official doctrine as established at the Jackson's Mills (West Virginia) conference in 1949 lists five approaches, four of them indirect: The student is made "safe" by—

1. Developing "a strong sense of personal and social responsibility for the common welfare"
2. Developing "pride in maintaining high standards of performance"
3. Promoting "the safe, efficient, and enjoyable use of equipment and environment"
4. Promoting "habits of co-operation in meeting problems of the common welfare"
5. Preparing himself for a "socially useful" job

All of these main purposes have two or more sub-purposes listed. Thus the fifth sub-purpose of number 1 is to develop "a dynamic realistic philosophy to guide individual and group thinking in working toward a solution of the traffic problem." When the sub-purposes are added to the major ones, the teacher and student are confronted with the problem of achieving twenty-three sublime and useful purposes in thirty-six lessons, one of which is the development of "a dynamic realistic philosophy."

The science of driver training is completely unphilosophical. It limits itself to the fifth purpose—that of doing a job well. In fact, the science doesn't speak of "socially useful" jobs, because few drivers can judge whether they are doing what is socially useful; hence a job is simply called a job. The approach is direct. It begins not in academic theory but with the right use of the physical eye. Among the purposes of the driver trainer are these five to train a student:

1. To aim high in steering
2. To get the big traffic picture
3. To keep his eyes moving
4. To leave himself an "out"
5. To make sure he is seen

Harold Smith, formerly safety consultant to the Ford Motor Company, has been so successful in practicing this science and in teaching others to teach it that one popular name for it is "the Smith System."

A third major difference is in the attitude of the teacher toward the student. The driver educator starts with the assumption that the student knows nothing and therefore must have everything spelled out for him. Thus in *Man and the Motor Car* the student is told:

PROBLEM 1: We have a traffic problem and we are all concerned about it.

PROBLEM 2: Our nation is concerned also because so many are killed.

PROBLEM 3: The problem becomes more complex because of the rapid increase in number of cars.

PROBLEM 4: The instruments on the instrument panel tell us what is going on inside the car.

PROBLEM 5: We should develop good habits of driving.

PROBLEM 6: Sick people cannot drive well and healthy people can.

PROBLEM 7: Good people make good drivers and bad people make bad drivers.

PROBLEM 8: The engine makes the car go.

PROBLEM 9: One should take good care of a car, and a person should use discretion in buying one.

PROBLEM 10: The laws of motion apply to cars in motion.

PROBLEM 11: Man-made laws apply to drivers of cars.

PROBLEM 12: Automotive engineers, highway engineers, and traffic engineers all contribute to safe driving.

PROBLEM 13: Drivers and car owners can be made to pay for accidents and damages.

PROBLEM 14: Policemen enforce traffic laws and we should co-operate with them.

PROBLEM 15: City driving has its problems.

PROBLEM 16: Country driving also has its problems.

PROBLEM 17: Special problems are encountered on super-highways.

PROBLEM 18: Some aspects of driving are fundamental.

PROBLEM 19: One must keep one's eyes open for a quick response to emergencies.

PROBLEM 20: Pedestrians and drivers must co-operate.



PROBLEM 21: Drivers and bicyclists must co-operate also.

PROBLEM 22: We can all help to improve the situation by co-operation.

In the book these twenty-two problems or lessons occupy 341 pages.

As the preceding problems show and as the text itself states, two social sciences, psychology and sociology, are supposed to be the sciences which will solve the accident problem so that "we will not be in constant danger of destroying one another." By an academic study of the psychological and sociological foundations of accident causation, a boy or girl is allegedly immunized against avoidable accidents. This socio-psycho knowledge will drive out the evil attitudes and infuse the charitable ones. Thus youth, filled with good intentions, is often asked to subscribe to Good Driver Oaths, is asked to remember the Golden Rule of the Road: "Drive as you would have others drive—courteously, carefully, and safely."

The driver trainer disagrees sharply. Well-intentioned people experience grief on the highway all the time. According to one report, 85 per cent of all accidents happen to the best people, to citizens who love their wives, adore their children, and yearn for the common welfare. So the driver trainer begins his teaching about where the driver educator ends his—with Problems 18 and 19, which treat of the fundamentals of real driving. The driver trainer makes the primary assumption that his trainee was not born yesterday but has learned from the greatest of teachers, experience, that we do have a traffic problem, that cars have internal-combustion engines, that laws govern the use of cars on public roads, that cars must be jacked up before changing tires, that the panel has gauges which tell the driver various stories, and that two solid bodies cannot occupy the same space simultaneously. The driver trainer assumes that every boy and girl knows Newton's Laws of Motion, not necessarily in theory but simply through the experience gained in childhood from falling off tricycles and bicycles and from running around corners. He also assumes that the trainee already knows the meaning of a sign with the four-letter word STOP, and that no drills are needed on the interpretation of signs with arrows on them. He assumes that the trainee has learned elementary



driving, can start and can stop a car, push appropriate buttons, recognize the need for gasoline, and translate P N D L R on the automatic transmission. In other words, a driver trainer believes that what a student and his parents can readily do for themselves they should do, and that the superficial, the trivial, the self-evident, and the irrelevant should be omitted. Good driving is a matter not of how maladjusted other people are nor of the sociology of mass production, but of what you do with your eyes and feet as the traffic picture unwinds before you.

The driver trainer leans heavily on the fact that good driving is a matter of small intelligence and much training. Thousands and thousands of excellent chauffeurs, bus drivers, taxi men and women, and truckdrivers for commercial fleets roll up remarkable records—the best in the country—without benefit of the higher sociological and psychological science, often without high school diplomas, some even without average intelligence. Good, “safe” drivers begin with upper-level morons, persons incapable of abstract thinking, incapable of interpreting the meaning of a word like “egocentricity.” The lower-grade moron can never be trained to be a first-class driver because he is incapable of concentrating for prolonged periods, and on an all-day drive he is not to be trusted to keep his mind on his job. But high-level morons can and do, and so can those above them in intelligence. There is evidence to support the view that those with intelligences in the 80 to 100 I.Q. range make the best drivers because this group has the least difficulty in giving single-minded attention to the one job of alertly watching the road and of adjusting its driving to the changing pattern, not of the subtle soul, but of the ever-changing physical scene. The low accident rate for trained *uneducated* drivers suggests that controlled practice and experience, rather than theory and virtue, make the careful driver, and a further fact is alleged in support of the idea.

Among the best drivers in America are James Hoffa’s Teamsters. Case studies of the rank and file membership of this extensive union reveal no superior ethical excellence. This group of more than a million shows no signs of an intense desire to ennoble itself by inward purgation. The group is not distinguished for its civic virtue, nor does the country look to it for

leadership. If civic virtue is the basis of good driving, then the best drivers surely must have the highest civic virtue. Few citizens outside the Teamsters' Union would make this claim for it. And thus the driver trainers roundly assert that skillful driving has no visible relationship to civic virtue. Bad citizens often drive well and good citizens often drive badly; no citizen should be licensed to drive merely because he has the safety soul-set.

This assertion points up a major difference in testing citizens for their licenses. The educator emphasizes the attitude test; the trainer, the ability test. The position of the educators is well illustrated by the following anecdote. At a famous safety center a professor of safety in the summer of 1960 was lecturing a class of graduate students who were studying for certificates to teach driver education. He said, "It does not matter if your students have an A in theory and an A in skillful driving; if they have the wrong attitude, flunk 'em." If a trainer had been lecturing the same class, he doubtless would have said, "It does not matter if your student has an F in theory and knows less than nothing about the history of transportation and kinetic energy; it does not matter whether he votes for Nixon or for Kennedy; but if he uses his eyes badly and does not see the whole traffic picture, flunk him with a double F." At no point is the trainer more diametrically opposed to the educator than on this one.

From this difference springs the difference in emphasis on amount of theory and amount of practice. At a meeting in 1949, the educators ruled that thirty hours of theory are needed to produce the right attitude and that six hours of practicing it behind the wheel suffice. Out of this group agreement has come the standard thirty-and-six ruling which legislatures have written into state laws. Hence, according to some laws, the school guarantees to the state that the applicant for a driver's license has the right attitude, and is "safe," because he has a certificate from the school proving he has passed the 30-6 course of study.

The trainer puts his emphasis not on any particular number of hours of theoretical study. People differ so markedly in their powers of observation that one person may need a hundred hours of training before he habitually sees the whole traffic picture and responds to it accurately; twenty hours may suffice

for another; a thousand may do a third scant good. The whole idea of some fixed schedule is, to a trainer, absurd. As one well-advertised trainer has expressed it: "Six hours of road practice is just enough to train a boy to drive dangerously. It is unethical and wicked to do that." The trainer who said this disguises himself as an educator. That is to say, he draws his salary from a school board to give a 30-6 course in driver education. Instead, he gives as much training and as little education as he can in the hours allotted to him. In this devious way he salves a tender conscience.

To a citizen who compares the results of these two approaches, the case for the trainer looks strong. In an academic environment, intelligence is at a premium; but in a congested stream of fast-flowing traffic the trained eye and the tutored foot count most heavily. Hence a trained taxi man or bus driver, even if a high-class moron, does his job deftly day in and day out. He may be unable to extract the square root of 4, but he sees the whole traffic picture. He "co-operates" not from love of the common welfare but from habit. If the accident record of the educated driver equaled that of the trained driver, a citizen might well say that one was as good as the other. But since trained commercial drivers have half as many accidents as the average driver, and since educated male drivers in the 16-25-year range have twice to four times as many as the average driver, a citizen may hazard the opinion that training is to education as 4 or 8 is to 1.

Since no solid statistical research has yet been completed on the relative accident rates of the trained *vs.* the educated, a citizen may not state the 8 to 1 ratio positively. All that is known for sure is that the "trained" drivers of commercial vehicles have remarkable records and the "educated" drivers of pleasure cars do not. A great deal of statistical research has been done on the question of the difference between the educated driver and the untrained driver. This kind of research is valueless because the practice of some states in licensing untrained drivers is to be condemned in all states. Such research simply evades the issue.

Since the accident rates of trained drivers are superior to those of educated drivers, a citizen may infer that training is

superior to educating. If a citizen lives in a community where the other citizens insist that the local school assume the responsibility for immunizing their children against auto accidents, then that citizen may reasonably request that the school give thirty hours of training on the road behind the wheel and six hours of educating in the classroom. Common sense supports the stand of the driver trainer who said, "Six hours of training behind the wheel is just enough to teach a child to drive dangerously." The statistics seem to confirm his judgment. If the school is going to assume this responsibility, let it really assume the full load and give training commensurate with the danger. If an average of fifty hours is needed, then fifty hours should be given. To do otherwise would be unethical and wicked; for when the school assumes the responsibility, it ought to be held responsible for the results. When the school says to the citizen, "We will safety-proof your child," the citizen has the right to say to the school, "Be sure you do."



## CHAPTER VI

### *Driver Education as a Branch of Consumer Education*

SAFETY EDUCATION in the elementary school system represents the purest elements in the safety movement. Although the educational theory behind this kind of education leads to many a time-wasting project, the central purpose is uncontaminated and pure. To protect the child against the brutal injuries that the auto inflicts is to do our solemn duty as parents, citizens, and teachers. The recent experiments, however, in putting driver education into nursery schools have questionable validity. To have little cars and large classrooms designed as driving ranges, so that year by year these little mobile laboratories condition the child to the exigencies of real roads and real cars, is to view the child not as a child but as an accessory to a machine. One way of making little children littler is to put them through a school system operated by those who see life through a windshield. But the idea that the car is an infamous killer and maimer of children is a true idea and must be respected.

In the grade schools the activities of such men as Dean Payne and Whitney stemmed from the purest of motives. The early life adjusters had no notion that they were opening up new markets and preparing the way for pressure groups which would view the schools as their property. They did not realize that when they gave health education first place in the new curriculum they would expand the market for chewing gum and cola drinks. And when they put thrift education in second place they did not visualize the introduction of a miniature stock exchange into the classroom. Nor did they foresee art purchasable from juke boxes in school cafeterias, nor consumer education given a high priority. In other words, they failed to recognize the implications of their own theory: The full adjustment of the child in a commercial industrial society is adjustment to the



market place. Health, thrift, safety, music—all become in varying degrees and ways branches of consumer education.

A nine-billion-dollar annual market rests in the hands of teenagers alone, a market well worth exploiting. The size of the grade-school market has not been estimated, but its value in terms of chewing gum and candy must be high, if judged by the amount of money spent on promoting gum. In recent years the National Education Association has been running in its *Journal* a series of advertisements of Wrigley's Spearmint Gum as part of the health education of children. The teacher is told that it is "healthful," that it gives "a little lift," that "smooth satisfying chewing helps relieve tensions," that it "aids digestion, too" (March, 1960, p. 72). Such campaigns seem to pay off. "A survey of a West Hartford (Conn.) high school disclosed that 75% of the students habitually chew gum or candy during class" (*N.Y. Times Magazine*, Jan. 8, 1961, p. 46).

The American Bottlers of Carbonated Beverages, a non-profit association of manufacturers of bottled soft drinks, also recognize the importance of health education as a part of consumer education. In the influential magazine, *School Management*, the American Bottlers go right over the heads of the teachers and appeal directly to school administrators, principals, and superintendents to promote the consumption of Pepsis and Cokes. They are "an important aid in fostering desirable social patterns," and "if the subject of soft drinks in school comes before your Board, talk it over with your local bottler. He's a tax-paying businessman of the community, dealing in products which contribute to the local economy in the same way as other food products served on school premises. He's entitled to a hearing." (*School Management*, Sept., 1959, p. 2.)

Similarly in that branch of consumer education called thrift education it is now deemed appropriate in social studies to set up an imitation stock exchange, buy a few shares, and watch their value rise and fall as the weeks roll by. Fathers who are brokers are asked to explain the vagaries of the market so that a youth may invest wisely as he becomes better adjusted to life. The educational device of bringing in local people to do the teaching is called "the utilization of community resources." And a parent is frequently called a "resource person." The classwork

is called "citizenship" or preparation to play "a leading role in local, state, national and international life."

All the branches of consumer education are dedicated to safety in one form or another. No part is more devoted than driver education. In college classes the aspiring driver educator is told that he is a consumer educator and that an important part of his job is to improve the consumptive powers of youth. In the major collegiate textbook, *Highway Safety and Driver Education*, Chapter XXI has the title "Consumer Education." Its concluding paragraphs read as follows:

In general, consumer education is an area of increasing importance. Through media of communication users of products are learning how to select their choice of products so as to meet their personal needs, with due regard to quality and economy, as well as how to make the best use of the products they have selected with regard to efficiency and lasting use. These considerations apply equally to users of motor vehicles. It is logical, therefore, to include pertinent information in a driver education course. *As a matter of fact much of what is usually included in a driver education course may well be viewed as consumer education.* However, the content material that has been outlined in this chapter warrants more or less distinctive treatment in every course that makes adequate provision for classroom instruction.

There is still another reason for giving consumer education adequate attention. As a user or potential user of a motor vehicle the student's interest can be brought to, and maintained at, a desirable level by frequent reference to those aspects of the subject which have practical consumer significance. Such interest is a good basis for developing or supporting the development of important attitudes. It is necessary, therefore, that a teacher of driver education familiarize himself with the consumer aspects of the subject. Whether or not teacher preparation programs in colleges and universities include adequate provisions along this line, it is incumbent upon the teacher to keep himself up-to-date on consumer information. In this activity he will find much aid in materials issued by automobile manufacturers and various consumer or trade associations, as well as in the frequent newspaper columns and magazine articles on the subject. [Italics added.]

The place of consumer education in the high school curriculum has not yet been earnestly debated in public, either

inside the teaching profession or outside it. Two opposing concepts point up the issue. The now popular slogan "What is good for General Motors is good for the country" expresses the first. The likewise popular slogan "What is good for the intellectual excellence of our children is good for the country" expresses the second. According to the first, a youth is viewed as a part of the market; and as a citizen, one of his functions is and will be to make the wheels of industry hum, the keys of typewriters click. Hence ample time must be set aside in the curriculum for the cultivation of consumptive desires and the enrichment of the capacity to consume. The economic health and safety of the nation are involved. But according to the second concept, youth is viewed not collectively as a market but individually as living beings sanctified by mind. Hence ample time must be set aside in the curriculum for the cultivation of intellectual desires and the enrichment of the capacity to think. Those who espouse the second position in the debate argue that only the wise man knows how to consume judiciously, and that to cultivate the consumptive desires first is to exploit youth, for youth has not yet had a chance to develop its power to choose wisely.

Every citizen should be aware of this basic conflict between education for adjustment to the market place and education for enrichment of the life of mind and spirit. It really comes down to the large question of who is to control our schools. Shall the schools be opened up to reflect the competitive struggle for markets? Should we permit the schools to view the child in terms of his consumptive powers and to exploit or develop these? The life adjusters with the full support of our National Education Association, insurance companies, the American Automobile Association, the National Safety Council, General Motors, Ford, Chrysler, and the American Bottlers all not only say we should but we must. Many other citizens doubt the wisdom of using the schools this way. Illustrations are needed to clarify so important a matter.

In his capacity as a consumer educator each teacher of driver education is supposed to educate his students in the consumer science offered in the standard high school textbooks under such a heading as "How to Buy a Used Car." The teacher is told in college that one good way to teach this small science is to

lean on a community "resource person," namely, a local dealer in used cars. It is considered to be "good public relations" for the school to get some dealer to come to the school to expound the science. If the dealer handles O.K. used cars he will naturally explain what O.K. stands for in the used-car business and how to test a car for its O.K.-ness. If the dealer handles A-1 used cars, he will do the same for A-1. The principles of the consumer science of buying a used car are the same for O.K. as for A-1. One textbook takes its principles from *Money Management of Your Automobile Dollar*, a publication of the Household Finance Corporation. In it, under the heading "How much can I afford to pay?" youth is to ask itself the questions "Can I pay cash or must I finance the car?" and "How much do I have for a down payment?" and "How much per month can I afford for payments?"

The social science of wise installment buying receives some attention. The insurance business is praised because it makes possible the installment buying of cars. It is also praiseworthy because it enables an owner to "fulfill his social and economic obligations in the event his car injures another person or damages property." With insurance as with used cars it is considered good public relations for the driver educator to invite a "community resource person" in the guise of an insurance man to explain the various merits of various types of coverage. A good citizen will naturally buy good insurance from a good company as sold by a good public servant whom the teacher praises for having given so liberally of his time and energy.

Consumer education raises many delicate ethical questions because of the close ties between those who teach consumption and those who sell production. Professor Amos E. Neyhart, the inventor of driver education, relates an anecdote about what happened as soon as it became known that his invention was deemed a success. The local car dealer tried to give him a free car, for Neyhart had used his own in the initial experiment. He refused. Academic payola of this sort is much too blatant. The various industries which promote driver education give or lend cars to boards of education rather than to the teacher of consumption. To him are given scholarships and fellowships to



deepen his knowledge of the consumptive sciences and thereby to get the higher collegiate degrees that command the higher salaries. Some insurance companies advertise scholarships in driver education for such teachers as are willing to accept them. Thus the producers hire teachers to become consumer educators. In this field of graduate study, scholarships are given to those who are not scholars. The only prerequisite is a teacher's certificate and the desire to become a consumer educator.

It is but natural that an enormous amount of reciprocal good will is engendered by the sustained benevolence of those who sell toward those who train youth to buy. Thus we have auto dealers writing such testimonials as the following, from the *Caldea Calendar*, October, 1957, p. 5. (*Caldea* stands for California Driver Education Association.)

Strictly from a merchandizing and promotional angle, Starksen Chevrolet [of Lancaster, California] feel they have gained tremendously. Many times throughout the years the cars [which we have donated] have been shown in displays; they have been driven in our annual fair parade, and have been displayed at the fair. The importance of having the cars seen around town cannot be minimized.

Hundreds of students are learning to drive in our Chevrolets, and the influence they have on their families at the time they are thinking of buying a car is tremendous. Time after time we have had a deal tipped in our favor by a son or daughter who learned to drive in a new Chevrolet. . . .

With the ever-increasing need for Driver Education, we at Starksen Chevrolet are proud to be able to contribute. The cooperation we have had from all the personnel who head the Driver Education departments in the various high schools has been terrific. . . .

The rapport between the consumptive teacher and the producer of consumer goods is now so great that the driver educator teaches the child to revere the producer. Thus ghosted letters are made available to the children for them to send to the producers to show how grateful the children are. The following example was circulated among driver educators in 1954 with the remark that auto dealers who had donated cars were pleased to receive such letters.



DEAR .....

I completed my Driver Education at ..... High School in your 195— Ford.

I am very happy that I learned to drive safely. My teacher was patient and kind. I know that I would never have had this opportunity to learn to drive in a dual-control car were it not for your great generosity in supplying my school with a car. My parents and I are grateful to you.

Sincerely,

.....(Name)<sup>1</sup>

This aspect of consumer education, the development of gratitude in the hearts of youth for the sacrifices which commerce makes in youth's behalf, is not limited to car dealers. At the 1960 meeting of the National Safety Council in Chicago, the adolescents attending the Youth Sessions in the Hamilton Hotel were given on mimeographed sheets speeches to be delivered on their return to their high schools or clubs. The adolescent fills in the blanks. The following item G, p. 9, is to be the conclusion of the speech:

G. I would like to thank .....; ....., who sponsored my trip to the Congress (if your trip was sponsored). Numerous recognition breakfasts, luncheons and dinners were sponsored for the youth during the week. ....; .....; .....; .....; .....; sponsored these many functions. I would like to thank all of these organizations who through these special functions demonstrated a real interest in youth and in safety.

On a separate sheet youth are instructed to write letters of gratitude to (1) Allstate Insurance Company for lunch on Monday, (2) Nation-wide Insurance for the Youth Dinner and Party Monday evening, (3) Florida Citrus Commission for the "Orange Juice for the Party," (4) Allis Chalmers Manufacturing Company, Sales Promotion Department, for breakfast on Tuesday, (5) General Motors Corporation for lunch, (6) DeKalb Agricultural Association for lunch on Wednesday, (7) Thor Power Tool Research Center for Wednesday's dinner, (8) Amer-

<sup>1</sup> *Caldea Calendar*, Nov., 1954, p. 4.

ican Dairy Association for milk breaks on both Tuesday and Wednesday. In the mind of the citizen there sometimes lingers the question whether this shower of lunches, dinners, juices, and milks is prompted solely by an avuncular solicitude for the health and safety of youth.

Support for consumer education goes beyond sponsoring entertainments for children. In such a state as California, where driver education has been lobbied into a law making it a graduation requirement in all schools, the support of driver education takes the form of "Sustaining Memberships" in the California Driver Education Association. On one program the sustainers are listed as—

1. Allstate Safety Foundation of Menlo Park
2. Allstate Safety Foundation of Santa Ana
3. Drivotrainer Sales Company of San Francisco
4. Aetna Casualty and Surety Company of Hartford, Connecticut
5. Allstate Safety Foundation of Pasadena
6. Chevron Standard Oil Products of California
7. Cal-Farm Insurance Company of Berkeley
8. Ford Motor Company of Dearborn, Michigan

In the *Caldea Calendar*, March, 1959, p. 5, the following notice is printed: "We are very pleased to learn that CALDEA has acquired a new sustaining member in the Drivotrainer Sales Co., 552 McAllister St., San Francisco 2, Cal., phone YU 2-5422." The *Calendar* reports (June 1, 1960, p. 1) that at the annual meeting of the American Driver and Safety Education Association, "Capping a program that promises to top all previous ADSEA national conferences will be a California-style barbe-cue . . . made possible through the generosity of the Ford Motor Company." No mention is made of who sponsored the milk and juice breaks.

Commerce sustains both university and secondary teaching. The Center for Safety Education at New York University is nourished by an annual grant from insurance companies. The teaching in secondary schools is subsidized by the auto makers. For example, the Automotive Safety Foundation in 1959 gave \$46,000 to the National Education Association to help sustain the National Commission on Safety Education, a commission

which lobbies in Washington and which conducts a nation-wide propaganda for Driver Education. (*Automotive Safety*, Mar., 1960, p. 7.) Special programs of this commission are supported by special grants. Thus the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company underwrote a National Student Traffic Safety Conference in 1960. "The program is supported through a grant from Firestone. It is . . . approved by the National Association of Secondary-School Principals [a subdivision of the N.E.A.]. A business-industry and education advisory committee guides its policies." (*Action for Safety*, Dec., 1959, p. 1.) That the tire industry in 1959 hoped to sell 98,000,000 tires in 1960 is a fact that pops into the mind of the citizen as he reads about such grants as these. The *National Education Association Journal*, May, 1954, p. 298, has the following sentence: "The idea of driver education got its early support from hard-headed businessmen concerned not only with profits but with conserving resources and building public good will." In 1962 it may similarly be said that driver education has received and is receiving continuous support from clear-sighted businessmen who recognize it as profitable and as useful in "building public good will."

It would be an exaggeration to say that commerce both owns and operates driver education. It would be less an exaggeration to say that commerce owns it and that the life adjusters run it. It is no exaggeration to say that commerce finds that a steady, heavy annual investment in it pays good dividends.

The extent of ownership of education by commerce is best seen in the system of "accrediting" schools which commerce has established. Before consumer education became such an important part of life adjustment, the high schools were accredited by such agencies as the North Central Accrediting Association and by agencies set up by the various educational laws of the various states in departments of public instruction. That has now been changed. Commerce has set up its own agency independent of any national, state, or local authority. From its judgments there is no appeal. Commerce simply publishes the opinions of its own board of judges. States which excel in consumer education are "accredited" and receive awards; those which do not excel are blacklisted. The whole accreditation list is both published and publicized so that schools with "rich"

programs will be encouraged both to continue and to broaden them, and the schools with impoverished programs will be shamed into beefing them up. Since the accreditation is done by states, it is a valuable document for a lobbyist to use in pressuring state legislatures to enact special taxes to give subsidies to driver education.

Any citizen who wishes complete knowledge of this special kind of private accreditation of public institutions may request a copy of *Report on Thirteenth Annual National High School Driver Education Award Program, 1959-60*, from the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, 1710 H Street, N.W., Washington 6, D.C.

This institute, established in January, 1959, "to combat motor vehicle accidents on an industry-wide front," represents "three major insurance associations—the association of Casualty and Surety Companies, the National Association of Automotive Mutual Insurance Companies and the National Association of Independent Insurers." These number more than 500 companies and write about 80 per cent of the nation's auto insurance. The institute's purpose is to reduce highway accidents by "(1) Direct assistance for official safety programs in selected states and (2) Financial assistance to agencies doing effective work that contributes to highway safety." For twelve years prior to 1959, the accrediting was done by the Association of Casualty and Surety Companies.

Since this is the only national "accrediting" agency in the country, since it is wholly owned and operated by the insurance business, and since it praises or condemns every state in the union, a citizen may well ask: What principles does the insurance business employ in thus judging the fifty states? One would imagine that insurance men would judge statistically on actuarial figures, and that highest awards would go to the school systems of the states which showed the greatest reduction in death, injuries, and property damages. Since these companies write 80 per cent of the auto policies, they would have 80 per cent of the hard, unassailable facts in their own possession and could accredit in these reliable terms. Instead, they use a strange method which may suggest to some citizens an interest in consumer education.



The introduction of the report contains three especially revealing parts: the first is the propaganda for driver education entitled "Why High School Driver Education"; the second is "How the Award Program Operates"; and the third is the "Board of Judges." Each of these needs to be reprinted to enable any citizen to ascertain for himself whether the insurance industry is giving valid awards for reducing deaths, injuries, and property damage, or whether it is giving awards for some other reason.

The first item is the usual dogmatic statement, not of an insurance man but of a life adjuster who accepts the theory that he can develop "the personality of young drivers" so as to immunize them against accidents. Not a word is said about the possible superiority of driver training to driver education; no confirming actuarial evidence is presented in proof of the dogmatic assertions, which read as follows:

#### WHY HIGH SCHOOL DRIVER EDUCATION

The automobile has brought to America an economic and social revolution. While bringing incalculable benefits, the 175,000,000 motor vehicles that have been produced in this century have caused more destruction than all the armies of our enemies throughout our history. One of every two Americans will suffer death or injury on streets and highways during his life span unless something is done.

Is it possible to make our streets and highways safer? Yes! We are beginning to show progress in applying proved techniques of traffic accident prevention—improved traffic laws, intelligent law enforcement, effective driver licensing, sound traffic engineering principles, and other measures. There is one further step—teaching young Americans high school driver education.

The personality of young drivers must be carefully developed in such a way that they:

- . . . will want to drive in a safe manner
- . . . will know how to drive safely
- . . . will accept the responsibilities which accompany the driving privilege

We know two things for sure about traffic accidents: (1) Most are preventable, and (2) most are caused by human failure. Many users of our streets and highways lack the special



knowledge and understanding necessary for the development of proper traffic attitudes, habits, and judgment. They have not been educated in the fundamentals of safe driving.

The basic educational job remains to be done. Somebody must teach America's drivers how to use potentially safe highways—and the best place to begin is with beginning drivers.

No better agency can be found for teaching beginning drivers than our nation's schools. Effective driver education courses will develop the essential knowledge, correct habits, fundamental skills, proper attitudes, and sound understanding necessary for the safe use of our highway transportation system.

The second item, "How the Award Program Operates," reveals that the program has no relationship whatever with insurance. A measurement that would impress the average citizen would be the percentage reduction in over-all insurance rates. Since rates are calculated in terms of risk and since driver education allegedly reduces risk by 50 per cent, those states with the best courses should receive the greatest reduction in premium costs. There is no other course in the high school curriculum for which the cash worth is so easily calculated, the immediate value to the citizen so reportable; the simple cash test of the course is in the hands of the agency which does the accrediting. Yet here again the agency that could accredit in real terms of "safety" uses a completely different system, a system borrowed not from actuarial science but from the social science of life adjustment. The institute publishes no reason for rejecting its own figures and using only those that have no actuarial validity. To quote Shakespeare: "'Tis strange. 'Tis passing strange."

#### HOW THE AWARD PROGRAM OPERATES

Driver education, as a formal course, entered the high school curriculum in the early 1930's. Since that time, progress has been astounding. Since 1947, the Annual National High School Driver Education Award Program has reported this progress to the nation and has served as an incentive to further growth and improvement. Through this program an annual survey is made to determine the status of high school driver education in each of the states. Complete information on expansion and improve-

ment of high school driver education courses is made available and appropriate awards are granted to states which make outstanding progress and/or achievement.

A state may be granted either an Achievement Award or a Progress Award. For each of the award categories, the record of public high schools is separated from that of private and parochial high schools, but requirements for Awards are the same for both.

To receive an Achievement Award, 60 per cent of the state's public high schools must provide a driver education course consisting of classroom and practice driving phases. Sixty per cent of the private and parochial schools must participate to qualify for their own award. For award purposes, each of these courses must have a time allotment of at least 30 clock hours for the classroom phase and 6 clock hours per student for actual driving experience. (Where approved simulators are used, 12 clock hours may replace 3 of the 6 clock hours of actual driving experience.) Enrolled in these complete courses must be at least 50 per cent of the annual number of beginning high school drivers. Moreover, teachers of both phases of these driver education courses must have met the certification requirements for all secondary school teachers in the concerned state and must have successfully completed a college-credit driver education teacher preparation course or an equivalent course that has been approved by the official teacher certification agency.

To receive a Progress Award, minimum course standards are the same as for the Achievement Award. While percentage achievements are not required, the public high schools or the private and parochial high schools must have made an increase of 10 points in "performance score" over the score for the previous school year. The "performance score" is determined by averaging the percentage of schools offering qualifying courses and the percentage of "eligible" students enrolled in these courses.

The governor of each state designates an official to act as an Award Program Coordinator. Using standardized questionnaires, the coordinator gathers information from public, private, and parochial high schools in his state and summarizes the data on state report forms. These summary forms are forwarded to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety in Washington, D.C. There the staff prepares a detailed national report for use by a Board of Judges composed of leading traffic safety educators.

The Board of Judges reviews the data to determine which states are to receive awards.

Following the meeting of the Board of Judges, held during September of each year, states receiving awards are announced and presentations are made to governmental officials in the selected states.

Complete information on the status of high school driver education in each of the states is compiled by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. Information covering the previous school year is available each fall. The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety acts only as an agency to collect and distribute information from the states. The excellent work of responsible state officials, who serve as program coordinators, makes the Annual National High School Award Program possible.

The third item, the "Board of Judges," also has its revealing aspects. This jury is packed. Six of the ten members are life adjusters committed to driver education. The chairman is director of a Center for Safety Education, which is supported by an annual grant from insurance companies. The other judges are (1) the director of the School and College Division of the National Safety Council, (2) the secretary of the National Commission on Safety Education of the National Education Association, (3) the associate secretary, School Superintendents' Department, National Catholic Education Association, (4) the assistant managing director, Auto Industries Highway Safety Committee, Inc., (5) the co-ordinator, Audio-Visual and Safety Education, the Davenport, Iowa, Public Schools, (6) the immediate past president, National School Boards Association, (7) the president, American Driver and Safety Education Association, (8) the manager, Driver Education Division, American Automobile Association, (9) the state superintendent of education for South Carolina.

This clearly is a rigged jury: It is not an unbiased group of scientists judging the academic excellence of an educational program in the various states. It is rigged also in terms of its sponsors; not a single expert in actuarial science is there to press the claims of this branch of mathematics. In popular terms, a citizen may suggest that this Board of Judges is there to rubber-stamp the "findings" of the Highway Institute as follows:

The National Board meets for one day in September at a hotel like the Waldorf-Astoria (1959) in New York or the DuPont Plaza (1960) in Washington. Each member brings with him his copy of the *Report*, and in a few hours a national verdict is returned with never a dissenting vote. To judge each of the fifty states plus the District of Columbia looks like a job that might take our Supreme Court several weeks. This streamlined board can judge a state in a matter of minutes: if the enrollment in approved driver-education courses has risen 10 or more per cent according to the figures furnished by the institute, the state gets a Progress Award; if 60 or more per cent of the potential enrollment is enrolled in standard courses, the state gets an Achievement Award. Since this is a problem that a third-grade boy could solve, it looks to the citizen as if the National Board of Judges were a front for the institute, and it also looks like what Dean Payne referred to in 1937 as "a publicity stunt."

In terms of publicity it has many merits. In 1960, the National Board bestowed Achievement Awards on Arizona, Delaware, Florida, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, North Carolina, Utah. Progress Awards went to the District of Columbia, Illinois, and Indiana. A Special Award went to Michigan for being the only state to hit 100 per cent of its potential enrollment. The customary brilliant plaque is engraved for each winner, and on some prearranged day with vote-getting pomp the governors of the meritorious states humbly but proudly receive them: proud that the combined efforts of so many have contributed to lift the state to this high level of national excellence; humble in the thought that so much yet remains to be done. No governor calls to the citizens' attention the hard fact that these awards are not based on reduction in number of deaths and that no reduction in insurance costs goes with them. The state flag may be flown from all state buildings in celebration of the honor received; but the statistical count of the unhonored dead is not proclaimed.

The citizen who looks at the absolute facts, at the death toll itself, sees many strange discrepancies between achievement in school and achievement on the road. Those states which won were becoming deadlier year by year, killing 8,289 in 1958, 8,546 in 1959, 8,640 in 1960. Only two of them, Illinois and Kansas, showed a decrease. These two states killed 2,440 in



1958, 2,362 in 1959, 2,237 in 1960—an 8 per cent decrease well worth an Achievement Award. By contrast, Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, North Carolina killed 5,256 in 1958, 5,584 in 1959, 5,808 in 1960—a 10 per cent increase. Two states, Arizona and Delaware, killed their usual quota—593 in 1958, 600 in 1959, and 595 in 1960. But the strangest award is the Special Award to Michigan, which killed 1,382 in 1958, 1,473 in 1959, 1,596 in 1960, an increase of 15 per cent.

Michigan deserves especial attention at this point. It passed a law in 1956 making a high school course in driver education a prerequisite to a driver's license for boys and girls 16 to 18 years old. A special tax was levied to give a special subsidy. A Safety Center was set up at Michigan State University so that there should be no lack of expert professional life-adjustment teaching. Driving ranges and fleets of cars either were available or were made available. It was thought that since Michigan led the nation in production of cars, it should lead also in the production of people with the right attitude. The effect of the law was to make driver education compulsory: the figures show 100 per cent enrollment.

For the years 1958, 1959, 1960, Michigan led the nation in this branch of life adjustment. Likewise, among the big populous states, those which kill over a thousand a year, Michigan won first place: California went up 6 per cent, Florida 10 per cent, Indiana 6 per cent, Michigan 15 per cent, Missouri 7 per cent, North Carolina 13 per cent, Ohio 5 per cent. Thus in the race for honors for percentage increase, Michigan has a clear 2 per cent margin over North Carolina, its nearest rival.

If the National Board of Judges had given awards not on the theoretical basis of increased virtue among adolescents but on the basis of persons not killed, the top awards among populous states would have gone to (1) Illinois for an 8 per cent decrease, (2) New York for a 3 per cent decrease, (3) Texas for a 4 per cent decrease, (4) Pennsylvania for a 3 per cent decrease. In the judgment rendered by the National Board, only Illinois is recognized as worthy of a place on the list. And this place is not among those states which have achieved, but among those which have only "progressed." Michigan under this system received both an Achievement Award and a Special Award (in



three years it upped its kill 15 per cent). Illinois received the inferior Progress Award (in three years it downed its kill 8 per cent). A 23 per cent superiority of Illinois over Michigan might have caused the National Board to question its rating system.

A portion of the data that the institute put in the hands of the judges was based on the accompanying questionnaire filled out for each state by the reporting officer named by the governor. The institute does not publish the instructions it gave the

NOTE: Please record number of practice driving cars used in PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS by make in all applicable columns. To avoid duplication, cars shared with other schools should be listed one time only.

Make of Car	Number of Free-Loan Cars From Auto Dealers		Number of Free-Loan Cars From Other Sources		Number of Cars Purchased by School Agencies		Number of Cars Rented or Leased	
	New	Used	New	Used	New	Used	New	Used
Buick								
Chevrolet								
Dodge								
Dart (Dodge)								
Ford								
Mercury								
Comet (Mercury)								
Oldsmobile								
Plymouth								
Pontiac								
Studebaker								
Corvair								
Falcon								
Lark								
Rambler								
Valiant								
Foreign								
Others								
TOTAL								

judges for the interpretation of this information. For example, do states that pay for and consume the largest number of *new* cars per 1,000 children rank higher than states that pay for and consume the largest number of *used* cars? Citizens need to know how such facts are interpreted if they are to judge the accuracy of the interpretation. It is possible that the institute told the judges that this "testimony" was irrelevant and should be ignored. If so, the public ought to be informed.

The national debate on our educational system needs to be conducted much more vigorously and openly if the public is to be fully informed of what is going on. The place of consumer education in the public school system should be decided not by a national board of judges privately selected by a private propaganda agency like the Highway Institute, nor by the National Commission on Safety Education of the National Education Association, which is subsidized by automotive funds. Such national commissions and national boards cannot help being influenced by those who pay their salaries. The noblest judge on the Supreme Court is prejudiced in favor of the Constitution of the United States and works within that frame of reference. So also the noblest judges on the National Board are prejudiced in favor of the constitution of the Highway Institute and work within that frame of reference. The institute's "constitution," however, appears to have been written for it not by persons dedicated to the intellectual excellence of our schools but by persons devoted to the life-adjustment theory of the consumer educators. Had the judges been mathematicians chosen from the actuarial departments of insurance companies and from the mathematics departments of universities, they would probably have refused to award prizes in the frame of reference that the institute handed them and would have said to the institute: "Either give us a more accurate system for rewarding safety or appoint a less biased Board of Judges."

If as citizens we are to have just judges and a real judgment of our schools, we must ask that the judges be chosen by disinterested agencies. It is obvious that insurance companies stand to make a direct profit from those states that enact driver-education laws. In Michigan, where the potential enrollment is 100 per cent, there is the possibility of 100 per cent insurance coverage of high school boys and girls at age 16 or thereabouts. Consciously or subconsciously the insurance business cannot help being influenced by this market. If insurance companies were to establish an agency to judge the excellence of the teaching of foreign language, the citizen might raise no objection. If insurance companies were to set up an agency to judge the quality of the safety laws and their enforcement in the various states, the citizen could have no complaint. But when immedi-

ate direct sales are involved, the agency that appoints the judges should not be an agency that can profit by the judgment rendered.

A citizen may therefore justly request the Insurance Institute to rate the states not in the crude terms of class enrollments but in actuarial terms of reduced premiums for all citizens.

## CHAPTER VII

### *Academic Degradation*

WHEN driver education was invented, Albert W. Whitney and his followers in many a speech and written introduction asserted that the academic excellence of the new science constituted its right to status, to a central place among the subjects which represent the basic mind-forming disciplines. And from 1935 to date this assertion has been pounded so steadily by the drum-beat of the propaganda that it may be said to have throbbed its way into popular belief. Just as many citizens have been reared in the false belief that driver education cuts in half the number of deaths and injuries, so the kindred belief is widely spread that it deepens wisdom by making boys and girls into mature men and women. Acting on this belief, which is cherished by legislators as well as auto dealers and tire makers, legislation now puts the "young adults" on the road, age 14 and up.

A charming phrase, "the pursuit of excellence," is once again popular, and like 'coon dogs on a summer's night we all appear to be hot on its trail. But as with so many popular phrases and popular pursuits, we citizens sometimes fail to pause long enough to define terms and to make sure that we follow the right scent. Trails cross, and what began as the sweet scent of the 'coon may end with that of the polecat. It is well, therefore, to pause in our chase after civic virtue and moral excellence by means of driver education, to look over the whole academic terrain and to check the crisscross of the trails.

In that branch of consumer education that focuses attention upon automobiles, the standard of excellence is the standard as defined by commerce. The person who makes the auto the central feature of his life is an excellent person, and the national superiority is pictured in terms of cars per capita. Charts showing the rarity of autos in Russia and their abundance in the United States indicate the superiority of *our* excellence. The

texts the child studies point with pride to the fact that every sixth wage earner receives his daily nut rolls from autos and the industries they inspire. When a mild lull in business occurs, the auto dealers put up the sign "You auto buy an auto" to indicate the moral obligation of every citizen to consume autos in order to promote the general welfare.

The most striking of these many excellences is that which is said to arise out of mobility. A new definition of freedom has emerged, "The mobile man is the free man," and as a natural corollary, "The greater the mobility the greater the freedom." To go to sleep in Los Angeles and wake up in New York is supposed to have some salutary connection with freedom. But the freedom that is emphasized most is recreational freedom—the citizen may freely choose where to dance, dine, drink, hunt, swim, ski, camp, fish, and "invite his soul." We are, in the eyes of commerce, "a sun-loving, fun-loving people," and the textbooks picture these excellences so that the children may adjust to them. Somewhere along the line the pursuit of pleasure merges with the pursuit of excellence until youth may indeed be confused as to which is which. It may seem superfluous to the older generation to teach youth that it should love the sun and all its wondrous works. "In our day," says an oldster of 45, "we knew without reading the billboards that we loved both sun and fun."

In those schools which rely on the auto dealers to supply each autumn a new fleet of cars, so that each child may receive his adult license as soon as he attains the minimum legal age, the cars may be lined up and the students permitted to witness the formal christening. The superintendent or principal or chairman of the board of education is called on to express to the auto dealer the gratitude that all feel for the philanthropic concern of the dealers for the health, safety, and civic virtue of youth. The dealers reply in kind. The press snaps the pictures as the plaques attesting the humane ardor of the dealers are distributed. Thus a standard of excellence in consumer terms is established. The brighter boys and girls may become a little cynical on viewing this silver-plated philanthropy, but the less-knowing ones accept it at face value. All are pleased to get free driving



lessons plus academic credit, plus the keys to the family car.

In terms of consumer education, the car symbolizes the greatness of America, its unique excellence. No other country has so much horsepower per citizen, such freedom in terms of miles traveled. A citizen receives the impression that emancipated man necessarily operates on four wheels and that it was Henry Ford who wrote the real Emancipation Proclamation. The steady education of the consumer public by press, radio, and television establishes "the dynamic new world of power" as the sign of greatness and asks all of us to participate in this excellence. Naturally, the children swell the chorus. Their yearning for cars exceeds even their desire for carbonated waters.

Early in the history of motoring, academic educators recognized that just as alcohol and gasoline mix dangerously, so is it with cars and education. When the love of learning is asked to compete with the love of motoring, learning loses. It is like asking youth which is better, the dance hall or the library? Polls of students showed up to 100 per cent for driver education. Where academic educators continued to control higher education, as in some of our high schools and colleges, the private car was banned from school yard and campus. The simple reason was that few girls prefer to anatomize dead fish in unsavory laboratories when they might be skimming the countryside in a Thunderbird. Few boys can consume Plato when the autumn leaves are falling and a superbly sweated lass is available in the dorm across the way. And when the car is made a central feature in high school and in college, the love of learning may readily go the way of the dodo.

Statistical evidence of the relation of car ownership and scholastic achievement was slow in coming in. Ample funds were available for research showing the excellence and greatness of driver education. No funds were available for the larger study of the academic effect of the car on the personal life of the teenager, until such a study was underwritten by Allstate Insurance Company in 1959. Prior to that date, minor studies tended to prove what any thoughtful person already knew. But the studies showed the situation to be worse than people imag-

ined. At the Tenney High School at Methuen, Massachusetts, the students who drove cars to school regularly had the following academic standing:

0%	A average
8%	B average
28%	C average
64%	D or below

These figures were made public by the school's principal, Urville J. Beaumont.

A four-year survey at Madison High School, Rexburg, Idaho, of successive senior classes showed the following academic rating (from *School Management*, March, 1959, pp. 33-34):

0% of those with A averages	drove to school
15% of the B's	drove to school
41% of the C's	drove
71% of the D's	drove
83% of the E's	

A survey of seniors of the Prosser (Washington) High School showed the grades of those owning or using cars to be—

A and B group	11%
C group	33%
Below C	62%

These and other minor studies were only straws in the academic wind. They proved that more often inferior students drove cars; they failed to prove that when a gifted student falls in love with a car he falls out of love with learning. The important question is what happens to our best boys and girls, those in the top half of their classes, those with potential talent for leadership, those on whom the older citizens rely most to give intelligent guidance to the nation in the tough years that lie ahead? If this group loses its zest for learning, if it fails to develop habits of self-sacrifice and self-discipline in the hope of attaining the highest excellence its talents permit, the nation is hit hard.

No national loss occurs when an untalented boy finds an occupation appropriate to his ability. In fact, a national gain

may follow the discovery by such a boy that the servicing of cars can be a soul-satisfying vocation. But when a gifted boy, avid for a car, leaves school to obtain one by becoming a grease monkey in a service station, nobody really profits. It is on this aspect of the problem that the Allstate research casts a somber light.

The first Allstate publication has the title *The High School Student and the Automobile: A Study of the Relationships between Scholastic Records of the High School Students and Their Use of the Family Car, Conducted at Niles Township High School, Skokie, Illinois* (May, 1959). Two classes, the 884 juniors and the 571 seniors, were studied. The major conclusion (p. 5) follows:

Through the mass of statistical data gathered in the survey, one conclusion stands out: *Parents who allowed the unrestricted use of the family car or the student's own car could expect the student's scholastic standing to drop.* And the brighter the student, the more sharply his grades would fall.

The masculine pronoun is used advisedly here, since the conclusions apply mainly to boys. The number of high school girls who drive extensively turned out to be so small as to be insignificant to the survey.

The students most likely to own cars were found generally to be those who were among the lowest one-fourth in scholastic standing, the survey determined. After they acquire a car, their study time is reduced as they spend more time driving; consequently, there is little chance that they will improve their grades. In effect, car ownership tends to solidify these students in their lower-quarter position. In addition, the students who own cars lose additional segments of available study and home-work time when they obtain part-time jobs in order to pay for the maintenance and operation of their vehicles.

But the most damaging effect of car ownership was found among those students who formerly ranked in the top one-fourth of their class. Like the other students, their grades dropped when they became car owners, but the drop was comparatively drastic. The survey showed that *when these bright students became car owners, 87% of them dropped sharply in scholastic standings.*

A parallel situation is found when parents allow high school students to use the family car extensively. All grades drop, but the worst drop is felt by the brightest students.

The chart (p. 16) on which the preceding material is chiefly based, follows:

<i>Car-Ownning Juniors</i>		
	Ranking as Sophomores Prior to Getting Car	% Whose Grades Deteriorated After Getting Car
1st Quarter	18%	87%
2nd Quarter	19%	53%
3rd Quarter	20%	75%
4th Quarter	43%	31%

In May, 1960, Allstate published a much larger document: *A Teenage Pattern: A Study of 20,000 High School Students and the Inter-relationships of Their Grades, Cars, and Jobs*. Here again, similar statistics led to similar conclusions. The now familiar pattern of desire for a car leading to a job to buy and support the car makes a vicious circle. "We find," says Allstate (p. 12), "that use of a car is not in itself harmful and a part-

### PERCENT OF EACH GROUP WHO WERE A-B STUDENTS (BOYS)

*Those with:*

No Car—No Job 35%

Job—But No Car 30%

Car—But No Job 28%

Car Plus a Job 18%



time job is not harmful. But when we put the two together, then we see the scholastic destruction pictured in the charts" (p. 13).

Their chart shows what happens to our adolescent elite when they are permitted to choose between immediate pleasure and distant happiness. This large group—29 per cent of all the boys—has in it only 18 per cent of those in the car-plus-job bracket. The question of how many boys fail to capitalize on their potential talents because they have succumbed to the lure of girl-plus-car-plus-job is a social question which the Allstate study makes no attempt to answer. It only proves beyond reasonable doubt that the highest talents of many a gifted boy are lost to the nation, and that the unrestrained use of cars lured the boys away from the pursuit of excellence.

For this tragedy Allstate places the blame squarely on the shoulders of the American parent. The significant conclusions which Allstate arrives at are a part of the next chapter, which takes up the plight of the parent who is damned by insurance companies if he doesn't discipline his children and is condemned by the life adjusters if he does.



## CHAPTER VIII

### *Lo, the Poor Parent*

THE THORNY PROBLEM of what to do about the American parent has long irked the soul of the professional life adjuster. The science of marriage and family "solves" the divorce problem; driver education "solves" the twin problems of highway safety and civic virtue; but how can any of the new sciences convert parents from what they are to what they ought to be? The question of how to prevent children from being contaminated by their parents is so large and so important that the life adjusters have given it much thought. Out of their cogitations two partial solutions have emerged. The first is to have the child by precept and example teach the new science of safety to the parents. The second is to deny the parents the right to teach safety to their children.

Early in the history of the safety movement much hope arose from out of the doctrine of the survival of the safe. If, prior to procreation, the unsafe would only kill themselves off by their unsafe practices, they would leave behind no one with their bad qualities. The early elimination of the potentially bad parent would thus leave the market open to parents with natural or acquired safety soul-sets, and their progeny would be amenable to safety education. But by an ironical twist of fate, the unsafe showed an amazing aptitude for pre-death procreation, so that risky genes continued to flow undiluted in the bloodstream of the nation. Hence the problem of what to do about the American parent continued to vex the life adjusters, who began to lament in print, "If only we could get at *them!*"

The first solution which aimed at hastening the evolutionary process of the natural selection of the safe, was that of re-educating the parents by using the child as a teaching tool, an audio-visual aid. A child in the home is both seen and heard; a child makes its presence felt. To allow so potent an influence to lie unused would be to delay progress, retard moral elevation,

promote accidents. As early as 1913, the motto taught by Colonel Sure Pop to the Safety Scouts in the first safety reader was, "Safety Scouting Begins at Home." In the words of a president of the National Safety Council in 1919, "Safety engineers are coming to see that the foundation for Safety must be laid in the schools. When the children in the schools are instructed how to protect themselves and are taught to respect Safety, then through these children the parents in the home will be reached and influenced more effectively than in any other way." (E. George Payne, *Education in Accident Prevention*, 1919, Foreword, p. 5.)

But it is driver education that does most for the parents. In "The Dividends of Driver Education," Dr. Norman Key writes, "Those youth who have had Driver Education not only safeguard themselves, but influence parents who are drivers, thus making the whole family safer members of traffic society. They also help to instill in the father and other members of the family greater respect for the law. . . ." (*Teachers College Record* [Columbia], April, 1956, p. 476.) As former Governor Knight of California expressed it, "A beneficial by-product of Driver Education . . . is the service performed by the trained teenager who transmits his learning to his parents and thereby helps them correct faulty driving habits" (*Caldea Calendar*, Oct., 1957, p. 1). Opinion polls suggest the low esteem of youth for parents. "Because parents," writes a sixteen-year-old, "do not develop high enough standards, they are not qualified to discipline anyone else" (*Traffic Safety*, May, 1960, p. 18).

The life adjusters frequently warn youth against the danger of parental contamination. An article by Professor Amos W. Neyhart in the *American Magazine*, November, 1953, has the title "Don't Let Your Parents Teach You to Drive," and the lurid subtitle reads, "It's Murder! Says America's Foremost Authority on Safety Behind the Wheel." Because of the sacredness of the American mother, the American father is usually designated as the chief murderer. Neyhart ticks off his bad driving habits one after another and lists their consequences. Parents do not realize "that home instruction in driving is murder, although scientific evidence gathered all over the nation proves that it is." Only a driver educator should be permitted to teach this diffi-

cult science. (In fairness to Professor Neyhart it should be remembered that he wrote this in 1953 and that he really believed that "scientific evidence" proved his point.) Another report states that nine out of ten fathers are incompetent, and when any one of them teaches, "He nervously exercises his vocal chords and passes along his bad habits."

At state and national teen-age conferences on safety the problem of what to do about parents keeps coming up. In March, 1958, Paul Jones, information director of the National Safety Council, is reported to have said to teenagers at a conference in Springfield, Illinois, "How can you blame a teenager for being confused when the chances are his father's whole attitude of safety is to talk like a saint and drive like a devil?" (*New York Times*, March 9, 1958, p. 68.) A juvenile delinquent of sixteen exonerated himself in court for a smash-up by testifying to the mental confusion engendered within him because "my father drives too fast; my mother, too slow." Lo, the poor parent! A municipal court judge treats the teenager lightly in his court if the culprit "has learned to drive from his father or mother" (*Traffic Safety*, Nov., 1958, p. 12). At one conference the children were polled on what should be done about their grandparents. Should the elderly be permitted to drive? Are not slow drivers a menace? One solution suggested was annual physical and mental tests for grandmother as well as grandfather. If we are to have well-rounded social security, we must protect the elderly, aged 65 and up, from exposing themselves to the hazards of the road because their "reaction time" is going down. Youth is said to be "genuinely concerned" about the geriatrics problem, and is eager to solve it.

The children are instructed to be tactful and diplomatic in teaching and training their parents. If parents are not skillfully handled, maladjustments may follow, and the delicate teacher-pupil relationship may be broken. It is better to train parents by setting a good example than it is to instruct openly. Most parents are in the rut of long-established evil habits, and to get them out takes patience and time.

The second solution to the problem of how to segregate the parents is a legislative one. If by law a parent is forbidden to train his child, an effective barrier can be established. The

segregation law which effects this is the law that makes the school course the only avenue to a driver's license. Formerly parents got junior operators' licenses for their children. Then they proceeded to train them in the family car until they were convinced that their children were ready to drive alone. This meant, of course, that the parents associated with their children and could thus transmit their evil attitudes to them. A simple and remarkably effective device for remedying this was to legislate the junior license out of existence.

The Michigan law illustrates the point. It transfers from the home to the school the right to train children, age 16-18, to drive cars. This is done by canceling the junior license and by giving the school a practical monopoly during these years. The device is astonishingly simple. Unless an applicant (age 16-18) for an adult license can show a school certificate to the licensing bureau, it refuses to test him. The parent cannot get a permit to train his child until the child is 18. Only a professional life adjuster properly certified by the State Department of Education has legal power to ride beside the child as the child practices the theory of the safety soul-set. Thus the child gets his lifetime license uncontaminated by parental influence. At age 16, most children in Michigan, duly certified both by school and by the state itself, are legal adults equipped to give the safety soul-set to their parents and thus rapidly reduce mayhem on the highways.

This theory is based on the curiously lopsided belief that a parent's good habits are not transmitted but that his bad habits are. It is a well-established fact that almost all American parents drive courteously and carefully and legally. It is frequently pointed out that these parents, age 35-45, have a remarkably low number of accidents. It is never pointed out that a parent is often capable of self-analysis, can identify his own weaknesses or "bad" habits, can and does point them out to his child, and is probably the one person most competent to give a thorough training before allowing the child to assume the use of the auto. But in Michigan a parent with twenty years of careful, accident-free driving behind him cannot train his own daughter, age 16-18, lest he transmit some "evil" attitude to her. After she is 18, the law releases her from the custody of



the school, returns her to her father and mother, and they then may undertake to train her in the road a good girl should follow.

In Connecticut, which used to have a law somewhat like Michigan's, the General Assembly has passed a bill (*N.Y. Times*, June 4, 1961, p. 69) that revises the former law, which forbade parents to teach driving to their children prior to age 18. In that state, driver education was a monopoly not of the public schools but of private driving schools. The revised bill requires the parents to get teachers' certificates. If they have had five years' experience and if they pay \$3 to the Motor Vehicle Department, they will get "home driving certificates." The sequence of events is noteworthy: first, the ancient right of parents to teach common knowledge is abrogated; second, upon the restoration of the right, Connecticut parents must pay a "fee." The term "parental blackmail" has not yet been invented. It may someday become current.

Such laws create a new problem in civil rights. The civil right of a parent to teach common knowledge has never before been abrogated. At first all the various states recognized this right by granting junior licenses or learners' permits to all licensed parents who wanted to train their children on public highways. It was taken for granted by the states that parents would not risk their own lives and those of their children by thrusting them into congested traffic to begin with. Now the new laws deny two things to the parents: (1) the right to teach, and (2) the right to have the product tested by the state to see whether the parent has taught well and to determine whether the product is sufficiently mature and competent to go it alone. The abrogation of these former parental rights arises out of the new doctrine that only a life adjuster has the profound knowledge needed to impart the safety soul-set. Any Michigan parent may teach his child history, math, and physics; no Michigan parent may legally train his unlicensed 16-18-year-old child to drive.

This situation may create a new legal problem. Where the state has forbidden the parent to teach careful driving, can the parent be held legally responsible in the event of accidents and violations of the law? Where the state has assumed the full responsibility for putting the child on the road, should the par-



ent be sued if the state has done a bad job? These are questions for the parent-citizen to bear in mind, because at present the state may be doing the "educating" and yet the parent-citizen has to pay both for it and for the results.

The right of a parent to have his child tested when the child has reached the legal driving age has also been abrogated. The farm boys and girls who for years have been driving tractors, trucks, and cars on their parents' private lands cannot have their competence tested unless they can show a school certificate. Children in the country begin to drive motorized vehicles soon after they have been weaned. Mothers and fathers can be seen with child in lap helping guide the hay-baling rig. The city child born with a silver spoon in his mouth may at 16 not know the rules of careful driving, but the farmer's boy born with pliers in his hand has the feel of cars big and little and knows the fundamental rules. To refuse to test the country boy who left school at age 15 to farm with his father, to deny this boy the right to be tested until he is 18, is often to withhold licenses from the more competent and to give them to the less so.

A parallel bad consequence of compulsory driver-education laws is that the usual parental authority is paralyzed by them. The parent who will not permit his child to take the course becomes *persona non grata* of the home. Though the parent may know in his heart that his child is too immature to be trusted, yet the social stigma that attaches to such a parent creates a pain that few parents can bear. The consumer educators guarantee the safety of the child, and shall a parent say them nay? To do so is to condemn in public one's own flesh. When the other boys and girls have cars or keys to the family car, the parent must have a will of iron to say, "No; not for a couple of years yet."

Thus parents are caught in a tight squeeze. The law holds them responsible for the virtue of their children and hauls them into court when their children go wrong; yet the law also pressures them into what may prove to be an injudicious action—granting full-scale driving rights at age 14 and up. And even in those states where driver education is not mandatory, its presence in the curriculum creates a pressure: weak parents easily succumb to it; strong parents often weaken. The purposes of

consumer education have been well served; the parents, however, may dance to a tune not of their own piping.

The citizen-parent who has accepted the propaganda of the consumer educators, and who in all faith has turned his children over to the schools to receive a lifelong adjustment against accidents, is justly irked to discover that he is now condemned for having done his alleged duty. The research of Allstate Insurance Companies points the accusing finger at the American parent as being the agent responsible for academic degradation in the public schools. Parents, says Allstate, do not discipline their children, do not make them mind their books. Parents are too lenient and either allow their children to buy cars or drive the family car on week nights or take a job to support a car, etc.

In Allstate's report to the public in *Teenage Pattern* (p. 11) the parent is the delinquent. The concluding paragraph of the section headed "Significance" reads: "Even among students doing well in school, the acquisition of or extensive use of a car can be disastrous if the car is allowed to assume a *dominant* position. In both of these situations the blame points toward parents, who, by their own control over their teen-age sons' and daughters' activities, can decide whether these will work toward the betterment of his scholastic performance, or its decline, through the use of time in indulging in outside pastimes that could better be spent at his studies." So disturbed is Allstate over parental delinquency that its president, Judson B. Branch, wrote the following letter in May, 1960, and it is printed as the conclusion of Allstate's report.

ALLSTATE INSURANCE COMPANY

744 Skokie Boulevard

Skokie, Illinois

DEAR PARENT:

Our Research Division has presented in the preceding material many aspects of the car and its influence on youngsters.

You will have noticed a central theme throughout the report. The theme—"IT'S UP TO THE PARENTS." This situation was not anticipated when the program was undertaken, it simply developed as the almost infallible answer to the problem of teen-age car usage.

May we then offer a few comments—based entirely on the results of the study of these 20,000 youngsters. They are observations—you may, if you wish, interpret them as recommendations also:

1. Grades and cars can mix—in spite of what's been written—providing you control the “mix” and control it with authority.
2. A car or extensive use of a car given to the 16-year-old almost always had an adverse effect on grades. When extensive car privileges are withheld a year—and then controlled—no serious problem resulted.
3. Somewhere along the line we must decide whether our son's version of “keeping up with the Joneses” in the matter of cars is worth the price he may have to pay in his future.
4. During the school term—make scholarship and homework first and cars second. If you lose this contest you'll lose the scholarship battle.
5. If your son's grades are in bad shape—don't allow him car usage under a promise to “do better.” If you do you'll practically guarantee that he won't “do better” and in all probability he'll do worse.
6. Restrict the use of cars to week-ends and keep the week-days for school work. There'll be exceptions of course but this should be the basic picture.
7. Part-time jobs and industriousness go together in our American tradition. Let's bring the picture up-to-date and ask “why the job?” If the job is to buy a car or support a car then we vote against the job.
8. You may have heard parents say “I told Johnny he could have a car when he earned the money to buy it.” We've heard it—heard it from educators, executives and similarly astute people. On the surface, it sounds firm and clear thinking—but—don't do it! Keep the keys in your own pocket. Don't allow the youngster the excuse “I bought it.” Lend him your car under proper circumstances rather than taking this tremendous chance on his educational future.
9. Forget the idea that “only a few have the accidents.” It isn't true and for many of those who believe it only tragedy can result. The accident problem involves most of the youngsters—not “a few.”
10. On safety—there is substantial evidence that the honest,

sincere youngster who assures his parents that he drives safely actually may not know what *safety* means from an adult frame of reference. Play it safe—trust his honesty—but *don't trust his immaturity*. At the very least—see that he's trained properly—in a High School Driver Education Course.

We began with—and will end with—one cardinal point. If you'll glance back over these ten points you'll notice that every controlling influence reverts always to parental control. This is not a problem for educators, safety engineers, auto makers, or anyone else. Near the beginning of this booklet we quoted a person in safety work as saying that only a small percentage of the youngsters were problems and he said further "if only we could reach them." We disagree—we think it's the parents—and to paraphrase the comment, we might add "if only we could reach THEM!"

JUDSON B. BRANCH  
President

To Allstate, both the citizen-parent and the citizen concerned about the intellectual health of youth owe a genuine debt of gratitude for this study and for the letter which concludes it. Item 9 is particularly important: accidents are not the product of bad attitudes; they happen to us all, and to the immature especially, not because youth is bad but simply because it is immature. Item 10 merely confirms Item 9. Its last sentence, which puts in a plug for driver education, simply repeats the popular untruism that there is one and only one way to train a boy or girl to drive properly.

It would be ungracious for anyone not to acknowledge the nation's debt to Allstate for this substantial study. At the same time, Allstate's wide condemnation of the American parent overlooks important matters. Allstate is one of the chief promoters of driver education. Driver education makes the car a principal feature of the high school curriculum. The driver educators expect the children to train their parents. Should not Allstate blame the children for having done a bad job on their parents? And should not Allstate assume some of the blame for promoting what appears to solve no problem but merely complicates those which we already have? The issues are rather more complex than those presented in *Teenage Pattern*.



## CHAPTER IX

### *Spidery Statistics*

THE STATISTICAL STORY of the rise and fall of the theory of the safety soul-set illustrates the aphorisms "The wish is often father to the thought" and "You can prove anything by statistics." For at first the soulful driver was thought to be 100 per cent immunized against "avoidable" accidents; then the statistical figure was reduced sharply to 50 per cent immunization; more statistics reduced the figure to between 5 and 15 per cent as a few insurance companies gave discounts by these amounts. Next, some insurance executives pronounced these 5 to 15 per cent figures to be spurious "sales gags." And the most recent position taken by Michigan insurers is that they support driver education "on faith alone." In other words, they appear to be uncertain whether driver education promotes accidents, decreases them, or has no real effect. The statistical figure, it seems, now hovers trembling at plus or minus zero. That inspired educational research should move across the dial of mathematical fact from 100 per cent to 0 in a quarter century is worth viewing, and the view should make the citizen wary of the phrase "our research shows . . ."

The weaving of statistical webs that have the appearance of scientific truth is an occupation popular among those who have an ax to grind, an interest to serve, a product to sell. The commonest method is that of the loaded questionnaire opinion poll. A Connecticut high school recorded a favorable 100 per cent vote for driver education, and the result was cited as proof of the excellence of the course. Whether the boys and girls voted this way from the love of safety or from the love of cars went unnoticed. More elaborate documentation of the proof of the life-saving, injury-reducing, property-preserving, virtue-inducing power of driver education is contained in numerous "research" projects. Each of these is usually summarized in a statistical table that looks impressively scientific. But when the



Careful citizen studies these tables and examines the method used in compiling them, he is often chagrined to discover defect piled upon defect. He hopes to find unmistakable proof; he actually finds a spidery web of unwarranted assumptions, illogical inferences, and conclusions which refuse to submit to the test of logic.

The most complete example of the spidery web of statistics is a booklet (copyright 1955) published by the American Automobile Association and distributed free all over the country. It has the title *Driver Education Proves Its Worth*. It was "prepared by the Traffic Engineering and Safety Department of the A.A.A." and carries with it not only the famous A.A.A. sign of approval but also the scientific halo of engineering. The first page states that it summarizes "all studies of any consequence" and that "in general, the results indicate that Driver Education courses reduce traffic accidents one half." In view of what follows in the booklet, this last categorical statement appears fantastic. To be sure, a superficial reading convinces one that the "worth" has been proved, but a close reading reveals multiple reasons for doubt.

If the booklet were used just to advertise the books and materials for driver education which the A.A.A. sells, if it were taken by the public as advertising and not as science, then most readers would read it *cum grano salis* and would regard it as another sales blurb. But the advertising is confined to the inside of the last page and is so inconspicuous that the reader is scarcely aware that one purpose of the booklet is increased sales of the text *Sportsmanlike Driving*, "Psychophysical Testing Devices," and other materials. Hence it is essential that the citizen look to see if the thesis—"Driver education reduces accidents one half"—is actually proved. Moreover, in 1957 this document was presented to the Congress of the United States as valid testimony in support of a federal bill to grant \$28,000,000 annually to the states as a special subsidy to driver education (a fact recorded in detail in the next chapter).

The introductory materials include an accurate statement of the statistical method which must be followed if the studies of educated drivers versus uneducated drivers are to be trustworthy, valid, and truly scientific. The booklet says that for these

studies to prove that the educated driver has only half as many accidents as the uneducated, a comparison of like with like must be made as follows: (1) girls must be measured against girls, boys against boys; (2) mileage must equal mileage; (3) interests and attitudes must be equal; (4) ages must be equal also; (5) the amount of education of one must agree with that of the other; (6) city drivers must be compared with city drivers, etc. Thus if two boys are equal in all important respects prior to driver education, a valid comparison can be made if one of them takes the course and the other is taught by his parents or someone else.

The citizen-reader will recall that in the chapter "Driver Education Versus Driver Training" the point was made that the adjustment educators insist that "attitude" is what makes the chief difference between the safe and the unsafe driver, whereas the trainers insist that good eyesight and thorough training are of primary importance. The central element in any statistical proof which an educator can offer is that he effected a change of attitude from bad to good or from good to better and that this change reduced accidents. Before his argument can have validity, it must prove that the safety soul-set did the job. Hence, Item 3, "Interest and attitude," in the preceding list is the crux of the argument. If careful, prudent boys are compared with careless, reckless boys, no valid conclusions can be drawn; the statistics are meaningless.

The reader of *Driver Education Proves Its Worth* is therefore both astonished and dismayed to read what is written about Item 3, "Interest and attitude." The breath-taking statement goes: "Unfortunately, from a statistical standpoint, the interest in driving of the trained [educated] and the untrained [uneducated] groups is not equal, since frequently those enrolled in a Driver Education course are students who are most interested or have a real reason for learning to drive. While no studies of attitudes have been made, it is quite likely that students volunteering for a driving course have a different attitude than [*sic*] those students who do not volunteer to take a course." These words take a reader's breath because they state that the research studies about to be summarized are statistically worthless. If all of them suffer from the same defect, if all have

failed to check the major element that makes or breaks each study, what can possibly be the point in publishing any of them? The reader may recall Dean Payne's criticism recorded in an earlier chapter. He said that those who would elect the course would probably be those "who would drive carefully anyway." And for all anyone knows, Payne was right. It may be that in all the following reports a careful boy or girl is being matched with a careless boy or girl. Obviously the reckless one is going to have more accidents than the careful counterpart; and, for all we know, the following reports "prove" only that reckless driving is more dangerous than the careful kind.

Three examples will further clarify matters. A "research" study from Delaware is written up as follows:

In 1953-1954, an evaluation of the Driver Education Program in Delaware, in terms of the performance records of the participants in the program compared with the performance records of non-participants, was undertaken by the State Department of Public Instruction and the Motor Vehicle Division of the State Highway Department.

Driving performance records of 2,186 former students were checked—one-half had received Driver Education instruction, including behind-the-wheel training, while the other half was untrained. All were of the same age group. The breakdown is also made by sex. A brief summary of this report is listed below.

BOYS	PER 100 DRIVERS			
	Warnings	Accidents	Arrests	Licenses Suspended
Trained	37.3	28.0	55.6	0.6
Untrained	48.8	44.2	77.8	3.2
GIRLS	PER 100 DRIVERS			
	Warnings	Accidents	Arrests	Licenses Suspended
Trained	3.6	5.7	4.4	0.2
Untrained	9.7	10.1	5.9	0.0

The total property damage costs for the 617 trained males were \$44,492, and for the matched 617 non-trained drivers the costs were \$80,058.

This represents a difference of \$35,566, or more than the entire Driver Education program cost to the State of Delaware for any one year of operation during the period that the trained drivers included in the study were enrolled in the public schools.

The property damage costs of the Driver Education-trained females were \$6,551, and of the nontrained females, \$8,915.<sup>1</sup>

Doubtless an expert statistician could give a dozen reasons why this research report is invalid, untrustworthy, and untrue. But even the inexperienced eye of the ordinary citizen can also see through it. If the natural bias of timid, cautious boys is to elect the course, and if the natural bias of aggressive, reckless boys is to shy away from it, then the difference in warnings, accidents, arrests, and suspended licenses is a reasonable reflection of the difference in character of the two groups. The one group that would drive more carefully anyway takes the course; the other doesn't. The real question is whether the course would have improved the characters of the "untrained" boys, and the study simply ignores it.

What the study unquestionably proves is that something is radically wrong in Delaware with the traffic laws and their enforcement. If 55.6 per cent of the "trained" boys and 77.6 per cent of the "untrained" were arrested in 1953-54 for traffic violations, Delaware should surely revise its licensing laws. If the results of driver education are 37.3 warnings, 28.0 accidents, and 55.6 arrests per one hundred boys, driver education is clearly a slender reed, a dangerous remedy. Yet this report is published as partial proof that driver education cuts the toll in half.

Likewise the property-damage figure is treated unsoundly. Instead of emphasizing how destructive the "trained" boys were, the emphasis falls on how much was "saved." The inference is that without training these same boys would have destroyed \$80,058 worth of property. The opposite inference is also present, namely, that the "untrained" boys would have destroyed only \$44,492 worth if they had been "trained." Both inferences are false. By this use of false inference, anyone can calculate even greater savings by adding \$35,566 saved by the "trained"

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<sup>1</sup> Reprinted by courtesy of the A.A.A.



boys to the \$35,566 that would have been saved if the “un-trained” boys had been “trained,” for a total savings of \$71,132. Amos and Andy used to calculate this way when they were planning their cat and rat farm.

The write-up of the research in Maryland is as follows:

Records were obtained for students completing Driver Education courses in June, 1948, January, 1949, and June, 1949. These records were compared with students from the same schools who had taken no such course. Only persons obtaining licenses were used. Records were obtained as follows.

AREA	TRAINED DRIVERS	UNTRAINED DRIVERS
Allegheny County	16	43
Caroline County	27	28
Howard County	38	14
Talbot County	22	14
Wicomico County	42	9
Washington County	51	28
Southern H. S.—Baltimore	18	15
Patterson Park H. S.—Baltimore	38	52
Forest Park H. S.—Baltimore	29	41
Douglas H. S.—Baltimore	17	4
Total	298	248

In order to make a fair comparison, accidents and violations for the same period of time were compared. For the trained driver, the accidents and violations were recorded which occurred *after* the person had completed his training and *after* he had received a license.

For the untrained drivers, the same period of time was used. These figures were used in computing the accident and violation rates per 100 drivers.

As a matter of interest, many of the untrained drivers had accidents *before* the period under investigation. These were not used in computing rates since there was no comparable traffic exposure for the trained drivers. These accidents and violations are shown in parentheses in the table below.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Reprinted by courtesy of the A.A.A.



MEN	Number of Drivers	ACCIDENTS		VIOLATIONS	
		Total	Per 100 Drivers	Total	Per 100 Drivers
Trained	194	10 (3*)	5.1	19 (3*)	9.8
Untrained	199	10 (13*)	5.0	32 (16*)	16.0
WOMEN	Number of Drivers	ACCIDENTS		VIOLATIONS	
		Total	Per 100 Drivers	Total	Per 100 Drivers
Trained	104	3 (1*)	2.9	1	1.0
Untrained	49	2	4.1	1	2.0

\* Figures in Parentheses indicate additional accidents and violations which occurred before the period under investigation.

This study has so many statistical weaknesses that it can serve no valid purpose except as propaganda. The common error which weakens all these studies has been mentioned earlier: boys and girls of equal character were *not* compared. In the second place, the geographical variable has not been observed. Sixteen "trained" drivers from Allegheny County are compared with forty-three "untrained" ones. In the third place, the total number is so small as to make the study statistically unsound. Despite these three self-evident weaknesses, the comparison is called *fair*: "In order to make a *fair* comparison, accidents and violations for the same period of time were compared." The reader's attention is drawn to the one "fair" element; the three "unfair" ones go unmentioned. Moreover, the figures in parentheses ought to have been omitted because they (1) are irrelevant, and (2) prejudice the case. The report asserts that they are included "as a matter of interest" but it fails to explain why irrelevant statistics are "interesting." A possible reason for their inclusion is that the report shows the "untrained men" to have a superior accident rate; 5.0 to 5.1 per 100. The figures in parentheses tend to offset this unfavorable aspect and provide a red herring to distract the reader's attention.

The Minnesota report is among the better ones because it involves equal numbers studied over a four-year period. But the failure to measure boys against boys and girls against girls is unforgivable because (1) it is easy to do, (2) boys have from three to four times as many accidents as girls. The basic error

of all the reports applies, of course, to this one too—drivers of like character, temperament, and family background are *not* measured against each other.

The State Department of Education is conducting a five-year study involving three groups of drivers as follows:

- A. 1,000 students who have had both classroom instruction and behind-the-wheel training
- B. 1,000 students who have had classroom instruction only
- C. 1,000 students who have had no instruction of either type.

Records have been tabulated for 1950, 1951, 1952 and 1953. Unfortunately, there is no breakdown by sex.

	GROUP	1950	1951	1952	1953
Accidents	A	28	43	48	36
	B	44	58	78	78
	C	60	82	89	84
Convictions	A	6	22	44	65
	B	13	27	61	101
	C	25	49	69	119
Revocations	A	0	0	0	1
	B	0	0	0	3
	C	1	0	0	4
Suspensions	A	5	13	13	12
	B	3	3	11	14
	C	12	14	11	14

A—Complete Course

B—Classroom

C—No Training

While it is dangerous to draw conclusions from small samples, there is some tendency for the relative value of training to decrease over a period of time. When comparing those with no training and those with a complete course, it will be noted that the ratio of the accident record is about constant over the period studied. However, the ratio of convictions drops from 4.17 to 1.83. It is quite possible that over a period of time the untrained driver learns by experience what the trained driver learns in a shorter period of time in the course. It will be interesting to see what this trend will be over a period of years.<sup>3</sup>

This report is of special interest because of its recognition of the apparent fact that driver education “washes out.”

<sup>3</sup> Reprinted by courtesy of the A.A.A.

The completed Minnesota study confirms the idea that there is a "tendency for the relative values of [education] to decrease over a period of time." Although it is probable that the better records made by the "educated" groups A and B were made because they would have been more careful drivers anyway, the fact remains that as the years go by the differences become slighter and the "wash-out" shows up. If this is true—and the reader is warned that it may not be true, that driver education may actually produce no basic difference in any accident rates, early or late—then the statistics "prove" that driver education does not produce the permanent safety soul-set, that it is at best a temporary palliative, that the promise of lifelong immunity against avoidable accidents is a false promise, and that other measures must be taken if a dent is to be made in numbers killed and injured.

A close critical reading of *Driver Education Proves Its Worth* may cause a thoughtful citizen to doubt the "proof" offered. The extrinsic reasons for doubt are that the American Automobile Association has a direct cash involvement in driver education (it sells the materials which driver educators use), and that the publicity attendant upon promoting safety schemes creates a "favorable corporate image" which is supposed to have an indirect cash worth because it leads citizens to buy other articles, such as memberships in the A.A.A. The probable presence of unrecognized bias in the Traffic Engineering and Safety Department of the A.A.A. is in itself an extrinsic reason for genuine doubt. The intrinsic reasons have already been given. "Research" that fails to include an accurate balance of all variables is simply unscientific.

A citizen could use this booklet to prove the need for sound licensing procedures, sound laws, and their strict enforcement. He could use it to prove that the "educated" child driver makes such a bad record that he is a very high risk. He surely could use it to condemn all states that have such bad licensing laws that they give licenses to "untrained" drivers. A cynical citizen might say that the booklet should have had the title *Driver Education Has Proved Its Cash Worth to Those Who Promote It*. No thoughtful citizen will use it to prove that driver education "reduces traffic accidents one half."

The fantastic weaving of statistical data did not stop with *Driver Education Proves Its Worth*. A single sheet of one large page printed on both sides and bearing the title "Two Decades of Driver Education" rolled off the A.A.A. presses a couple of years later. A revision entitled "Driver Education Saves 5,500 Lives" appeared in April, 1961. It has had the same nation-wide distribution as its predecessor. Using the imaginative figure of 50 per cent reduction in deaths and injuries, it presents to the reader an elaborate calculation which shows 5,570 lives saved, 194,890 injuries prevented, and a saving of \$151 a year for each educated child, for a total of \$696,810,000. The two sides of this flyer are reprinted here, so that the citizen may check on it for himself to see how assumption is piled on assumption, until the results, which *look* so impressively scientific, become mythological. One very important item is completely omitted in the calculation: a purpose of driver education is to put into every potential child-driver's hand an adult driver's license on or about the day the child reaches the minimum legal age—usually 16. If driver education increases the number of 16-year-old drivers and others by 50 per cent, all savings are wiped out.

In the commercial propaganda designed to sell driver education to the nation, the most blatant aspect is that which purports to show "savings." Nowhere is any report made to the public of the "spendings." According to a report in the *New York Times*, youth represent a nine-billion-dollar yearly market. According to another report it is ten billion dollars. If in the "fierce" competition to "capture" this market, the auto industry has managed a "fair" lion's share in the last quarter century, how much of this share is theirs because of the pressure through driver education to get the youngsters on the road at the earliest legal moment? Until this figure is known, the "savings" have a rainbow-like quality about them, "vanishing amid the storm" of spending. If a youngster's auto bill averages \$400 a year and the alleged "savings" are \$100 a year, the loss is \$300 a child. The money that might have been saved to defray possible college expenses has gone the way of the rainbow. An easy piece of valid research would be a calculation of how much the citizens of a state that licenses at age 18 "save" over those of the state that licenses at age 14. "Savings" in life as well as "savings"



in cash could also be calculated. Research which balances death-dealing against life-saving is as badly needed as that which balances debits and credits in cash.

Unbiased scientific research since 1955 has come to the conclusion that driver education as presently given to children across the nation probably has no power to reduce the number of accidents. And the parallel conclusion is that its introduction as a science that would produce this result was *premature*. Thus Dr. John J. Conger, M.D., a scientist with an impeccable reputation for probity, writes in *Research Review* (the quarterly supplement of *Traffic Safety*) in June, 1961, as follows: "Our research has shown . . . that there are statistically significant differences between high school students who elect to take driver education and those who do not. . . . Thus it appears at least possible that initial personality differences . . . may be a contributing—in fact, could conceivably be a primary—factor in accounting for obtained differences in accident-violation rates between the two groups."

Dr. Conger goes on to point out the social danger of erecting a curriculum on spidery statistics by saying, "I mention such examples merely to indicate the pitfalls for the unwary in the complicated field of accident research. As with so many other things in life, it does not follow that poor research is better than no research. Sophisticated research is badly needed in many areas of traffic safety. On the other hand, no research is better than poorly controlled research which may result in important social actions based on misleading findings." (p. 31.)

Even within the National Safety Council itself solemn doubt now exists about the worth of driver education. The council's magazine, *Traffic Safety*, for April, 1962, prints a spirited exchange of letters between two well-known safety experts. The first, Menno Duerkson, safety editor of the *Memphis Press-Scimitar*, says flatly, "I happen to be one stubborn, hard-headed Dutchman who says that most of the 'proof' being used by the proponents of driver education is as loaded as a pair of lopsided dice." And Dr. F. R. Noffsinger, a proponent from Northwestern University's Traffic Institute, in his reply agrees that "there is a strong possibility that many of the so-called studies of the effectiveness of driver education are tinged [a better word would



# DRIVER EDUCATION SAVES 550 LIVES

What are the results of two decades of effort in promoting driver education? While precise figures are not available, reasonable estimates can be made of the accomplishments to date. These may be briefly summarized as follows:

1. Over six million high school students have completed courses involving both classroom instruction and behind-the-wheel practice driving.
2. This training has been given at a total cost to schools (teachers' salaries, text materials, car operating costs and incidentals) of about \$240,000,000. (Estimated at \$34 per student to 1956 and \$44 per student from 1956 to 1960.)
3. The economic loss prevented during these 24 years amounts to \$697,000,000 or \$113 per student trained.
4. For each one dollar invested by the schools, about three dollars have been saved in terms of the economic cost of the accidents prevented.
5. An estimated 5,570 lives have been saved and nearly 200,000 injuries prevented as a result of this program.

Further details of how these estimates were developed are given below.

## ASSUMPTIONS:

Column 1 - The first course for high school teachers was given to 36 teachers in Bluefield, West Virginia, December 13-19, 1936. The number of high school students taking courses prior to 1936 is probably insignificant.

Column 2 - The number of cars in use is based on records of AAA assigned cars plus estimates of cars obtained directly from dealers and through other arrangements.

Figures for the 1953-54 school year and later are based on reports of the National High School Driver Education Award Program.

Column 3 - In computing the total number of students trained each year, it was assumed that 150 were trained per car per year 1936-1942, 100 were trained per car per year 1942-1945, and 50 were trained per car per year 1945-1953. In 1947, an analysis of data from 68 schools indicated that 73 persons were trained per semester (Research Report No. 32). In 1950 an analysis of 534 schools indicated that 28 persons were trained per car per semester (Research Report No. 36). In the early days, training cars were hard to get so the requirements were high.

Beginning in the 1953-54 school year, the number given is based on reports of the National High School Driver Education Award Program and includes all students taking a complete course including both classroom instruction and behind-the-wheel practice driving. It is fully realized that these courses vary widely in quality as well as in hours of instruction.

Column 4 - This is merely an accumulation of Column 3 to show the total number of students that had received training by the end of that school year.

Column 5 - Most of the studies made to determine the results of driver education have been made within a few years after the course was completed. From a study made in Minnesota (Driver Education Reduces Accidents and Violations), there is an indication that after a period of time the accident rates of the trained and untrained groups tend to approach each other. No one has the information to indicate how the trained and untrained groups will compare 5, 10 or 15 years after the course has been completed. For the lack of concrete data, it has been conservatively assumed in this report that the accident ratio of the two groups would be 1 to 2 for the first five years and 1 to 1 after that time.

Column 6 - For each year, an estimate was made of the number of persons who would have been killed by the drivers who were trained during the previous five years, if those drivers had been typical drivers without any formal driving instruction.

According to "Automobile Facts and Figures," 18.7 per cent of all drivers were under 25 in 1952 and according to "Accident Facts," this age group was involved in 26 per cent of the fatal accidents, so their fatal accident rate is 1.39 times the national average.

Students who have taken a driving course have a much larger proportion of girls than the driving population at large. According to "Automobile Facts and Figures," in 1952, 29 drivers out of 100 were women, and according to "Accident Facts," they were involved in 8 per cent of the fatal accidents. Also, a recent study (Research Report No. 44) indicates that 57 per cent of the persons enrolled in Driver Education classes are women. If it is assumed, for ease of computation, that 100 typical drivers have 100 fatal accidents, then the rate for men would be 1.296 and for women .276. The following simple computation then gives the relative rate that would be expected for 100 driver education students:

$$\begin{array}{r} \text{Men} \dots 43 \times 1.296 = 55.7 \\ \text{Women} \dots 57 \times .276 = 15.7 \\ \hline \text{Total} \dots 71.4 \end{array}$$

In other words, if age were not a factor, the fatal accident rate of students in a driver education class would be 71.4% of the national average. However, since this age group has a rate 1.39 times the national average, the expected rate would be  $.714 \times 1.39 = .992 \dots$  or practically equal to the national average.

In other words, the larger percentage of girls enrolled in driver education courses about balances the tendency of young drivers to have more than their share of accidents. The figure of .992 will vary from year to year but, since it is based on several estimates, a figure of 1.00 has been used for all years covered by the study.

The number of persons killed by 100,000 drivers was computed for the years 1947-1952. The average was 59. This figure was used in computing Column 6 up to the 1952-53 school year.

(1) School Year	(2) Cars In Use	(3) Persons Trained	(4) Accumulated Total Trained End of Year	(5) Total Trained with 5 Years or Less Experience	(6) Estimated Deaths Had Drivers Not been Trained	(7) Lives Saved	(8) Economic Loss Prevented During Year	(9) Saving Per Person Trained During Year	(10) Injuries Prevented
1936-37	3	450	450	450	0	0	\$ 0	\$ 0	0
1937-38	5	750	1,200	1,200	1	0	0	0	0
1938-39	25	3,750	4,950	4,950	3	0	50,000	13	35
1939-40	25	3,750	8,700	8,700	5	2	100,000	27	70
1940-41	50	7,500	16,200	16,200	10	7	250,000	33	175
1941-42	50	7,500	23,700	23,250	14	7	350,000	47	245
1942-43	10	1,000	24,700	23,500	14	7	350,000	350	245
1943-44	10	1,000	25,700	20,750	12	6	300,000	300	210
1944-45	10	1,000	26,700	18,000	11	5	250,000	250	175
1945-46	75	3,750	30,450	14,250	8	4	280,000	75	140
1946-47	1,500	75,000	105,450	81,750	48	24	1,920,000	26	840
1947-48	3,000	150,000	255,450	230,750	136	68	6,120,000	41	2,380
1948-49	4,000	200,000	455,450	429,750	254	127	12,700,000	63	4,445
1949-50	4,500	225,000	680,450	653,750	386	193	17,370,000	77	6,755
1950-51	5,500	275,000	955,450	925,000	546	273	24,570,000	89	9,555
1951-52	6,000	300,000	1,255,450	1,150,000	678	339	33,900,000	113	11,865
1952-53	6,300	315,000	1,570,450	1,315,000	776	388	38,800,000	123	13,580
1953-54	7,234	418,443	1,988,893	1,533,443	830	415	47,000,000	112	14,525
1954-55	8,079	467,925	2,456,818	1,776,368	870	435	54,000,000	115	15,225
1955-56	9,024	527,440	2,984,258	2,028,808	1,030	515	60,500,000	115	18,025
1956-57	10,411	649,885	3,634,143	2,378,693	1,140	570	72,000,000	111	20,000
1957-58	11,964	738,408	4,372,551	2,802,101	1,260	630	87,000,000	118	22,000
1958-59	12,249	870,338	5,242,889	3,253,996	1,462	731	104,000,000	119	25,600
1959-60	13,098	892,965	6,135,854	3,679,036	1,650	825	135,000,000	151	28,800
Total	103,122				5,570		\$696,810,000		194,890

For the later years, a separate computation was made for each year since the death rate per 100,000 drivers has been less in recent years as shown below:

Year	Drivers	Traffic Fatalities	Deaths per 100,000 Drivers
1953	69,869,000	37,955	54
1954	72,182,000	35,586	49
1955	74,685,000	38,300	51
1956	77,869,000	39,628	51
1957	79,631,000	38,702	49
1958	81,536,000	36,981	45
1959	84,000,000	37,800	45

Column 7 - A number of studies (Driver Education Reduces Accidents and Violations) have been made to determine the results of driver

education courses. While the results differ widely, it seems reasonable to assume that, in general, these courses will reduce accidents one-half, both fatal and non-fatal. Column 7 is based on the assumption that the fatal rate for trained drivers will be half of the national average.

Column 8 - The National Safety Council estimates that for 1952 the total economic loss from all traffic accidents was \$3,750,000,000. This, divided by 38,000, gives \$100,000 for each person killed. This economic loss includes property damage, wage losses, medical expenses and insurance overhead. The figures for other years were based on estimates for those years.

Column 9 - This was obtained by dividing the economic loss prevented by the number of persons trained during that year. The large figures in this column are the result of savings during the year from persons trained in prior years.

Column 10 - This column is based on the assumption that 35 persons are injured for each person killed in a traffic accident.

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have been "tainted"] by the fact that students have taken the course on a voluntary basis and therefore were students already having a healthy attitude toward driving."

Such statements circulate freely within the narrow limits of those who subscribe to *Traffic Safety*. The average citizen sees and hears only the old propaganda based upon the tainted statistics. It is beginning to look as if "the great American public" has been had, and unless the real facts are more widely circulated, it will continue in ignorance for a long time to come.

## CHAPTER X

# *The High Tide of Propaganda, 1947-1957*

IN THE DECADE between World War II and the launching of Sputnik I in October, 1957, the life adjusters and the consumer educators acquired an ever firmer grip on the public school system. In the colleges, new certification requirements which imposed more adjustment courses on prospective teachers pushed academic subjects farther and farther into the background. In the high schools, such subjects as mathematics, foreign language, history, English (both as grammar and as literature), physics, chemistry, and geography tended to become unpopular in competition with an array of behavioral sciences like physical education, home-making and marriage, industrial education, commercial education, social education, driver education, and farm or rural education. All manner of special sciences sprang up to adjust the child to the kitchen, the shop, the store, the highway. The powerful wave of isolationist sentiment that carried Senator Joe McCarthy so far up the beach had its equivalent in education. The object of education was not to emancipate the child from the narrowing provinciality of the isolated spot where he happened to be born, but to adjust him to it. History, literature, geography, and foreign languages take a child out of his locale and into distant times and far places. But in terms of consumer education these subjects have no cash worth. The goods they consume were produced not yesterday in Detroit but centuries ago in Egypt, Palestine, India, Greece, Italy, and in many another famous time and place.

The increased emphasis on what is near at hand, tangible, contemporary, immediately useful, gave rise to an unbalance the history of driver education illustrates well. During that prosperous decade, when school construction should have been booming and academic standards raised so that the children of



the forties and fifties could, as adults, cope more intelligently with the grim problems of the sixties and seventies, classrooms became scarcer, the curriculum more confused, and the child less disciplined to the austere future of a sustained Cold War. The isolation implied by an increased emphasis on motoring clearly suggests an impaired vision. Hundreds of bills were introduced into state legislatures to levy special taxes to give special subsidies to driver education. Many such bills were passed and are now in effect. No bills were even introduced, much less passed, to subsidize the study of Russian. In California, talented students graduated from high school without mastering a single foreign language, ancient or modern. But driver education, the safety soul-set, was mandatory. This represents the conquest of intelligence by commercialized virtue and might be designated as isolationism triumphant.

The best organized and most complete propaganda machine this country has ever operated in peacetime sold nationally the idea that driver education gives us vast monetary savings, markedly increased virtue, and a cutting in half of the number of deaths and accidents. The citizen who would not buy this package was clearly a misanthrope, an enemy of mankind, a miser, a betrayer of our young people. Once the spidery web of statistical "proof" was well woven, the propaganda machine went from second into high gear. All public service agencies both commercial and charitable were ordered into action. The National Safety Council, the American Automobile Association, the National Education Association were the three most influential campaigners. Insurance, gas and oil, tire and rubber companies, the Automobile Manufacturers Association, the National Automobile Dealers Association, outdoor advertising, radio, and television played important supporting roles and on occasion would steal the show. All of it was supposed to be philanthropic, and zeal for it created the favorable corporate image. The good citizen felt called upon to support it just as he supported the March of Dimes or the Cancer Fund.

Bernard M. Baruch in *My Own Story* (p. 101) writes that at the turn of the century, "an energetic campaign was being waged against cigarettes by the churches and Sunday schools.



I hope I do not impair anyone's faith in the motives of mankind when I say that much of this high-minded propaganda was secretly financed by the plug tobacco and cigar interests who used innocent crusaders as catspaws." A rather startling analogy can be drawn between the two campaigns. The question is: Who were the innocent crusaders for safety who were used as catspaws in the driver-education campaign? Who were among those who failed to recognize that this was a double-barreled campaign with one barrel shooting at safety and the other at a market?

Into the class of the entirely innocent must go the ministers who, on Safety Sunday, preached on the soul-saving excellence of driver education. Among the innocent should also be classed the teachers of driver education in the high schools. In college they had been taught to believe as an article of faith that the results of their teaching would really do what it was advertised to do. The third and largest innocent group is that composed of Mr. and Mrs. Average Citizen who accepted the advertising because it was repeated so often, and because no organized counter-propaganda existed to offset that which had sole command of all the mass media of communications. Not until after Sputnik I did anything like counter-propaganda begin.

So wonderfully organized and so complete was the campaign to nationalize driver education that it reached Congress in 1957. House Bill 5416, First Session of the 85th Congress, aimed "to promote safety in transportation by motor vehicles in interstate commerce by assisting the states to establish programs for Driver Education." On June 10, 17, and 24, 1957, public hearings were held on it, and these hearings are now available to the citizen in a government document entitled *Driver Education: Hearings before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce*. Section 4(a) reads:

For the purpose of assisting the States in the development of Driver Education programs, there is authorized to be appropriated for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 1957, and annually thereafter—

(1) \$28,000,000 for youth driver education programs, to be apportioned among participating States in the proportion that

the population of the particular State bears to the population of all participating States, determined in accordance with the last preceding United States census; and

(2) Such sums as may be necessary for administrative expenses (including salaries) incurred by the Secretary [of Health, Education and Welfare] in carrying out this act.

To get this federal aid, the various states would have to match it dollar for dollar. Thus \$56 per child-driver would be available as a special subsidy if one million children took the course. If a full-time teacher "educated" 100 boys and girls each semester plus another 100 during the summer, he would earn for his school \$16,800 annually over and above the regular state aid given schools by most states. If the salary of such a teacher were \$8,000, the school would have \$8,800 for overhead—gas, oil, tires, audio-visual aids, janitorial service, textbooks, and insurance. (The cars are normally lent free of charge by dealers as a public service.) And since the addition of a teacher at one point leads to the subtraction of a teacher at another, the school board could get by with one less teacher of math or physics or history. An economy-minded board could not afford to turn down so lush an offer.

Had the bill been enacted in 1957, its passage would have marked a great victory for the lobby of the life adjusters and the consumer educators. No state can easily afford to reject a federal grant, and in consequence more programs of compulsory driver education would have been enacted into law by state legislation. All states would probably have pressed the course into the standard curriculum. Few school boards would have had the financial or moral strength to resist the pressure.

The congressional hearings before the House Subcommittee on Traffic Safety symbolize the high-water mark of the propaganda tide. All the witnesses who testified on June 10, 17, and 24 were for the measure. All the evidence submitted for inclusion in the record was favorable. Every witness had a special interest to promote either as a salesman for the life adjustment doctrine or of some costly machine that implants the safety soul-set. The special interests were fully represented; the academic interests as well as the interest of the average citizen went by default because there is no lobby in Washington to speak up for them.

No one, for example, spoke up to remind the committee that the addition of one course means the subtraction of another. No disinterested witness appeared to give an objective analysis of the philosophy of the safety soul-set. The testimony was 100 per cent unbalanced.

Hence, the whole responsibility for protecting the nonspecialized interests of those who had no lobby rested with the committee itself. A citizen can take pride in the attempt by the committee to protect the public interest. Even though no witness against the bill showed up, even though the bill was written by the chairman himself, both he and other members tried on more than one occasion to get real proof that the safety soul-set reduces deaths and injuries by 50 per cent. Although they failed to redress the lopsidedness of the testimony, they tried. But they could do little because the atmosphere of the hearings was surcharged with zeal and faith.

The able and energetic chairman of the committee, Congressman Kenneth A. Roberts of Alabama, was by no means unaware of the lopsidedness of the testimony. He well knew that much of the blame for the traffic death toll was rightly attributable to the car and to its makers. In 1955 the results of the Cornell Crash Injury Research had demonstrated beyond doubt that the design of the car was such as to promote injury and death in the event of rapid deceleration or crash. Severe criticisms had been leveled at the manufacturers for what was called the horsepower race, the race to see which maker could pack the most horsepower into private pleasure cars. National advertising emphasized speed, power, jack-rabbit acceleration, zip (and sudden death). On June 6, prior to the June 10 meeting of the subcommittee, the board of directors of the American Automobile Manufacturers Association had passed a resolution in which they promised to be good, promised to desist from inflaming the national ardor for speed on the public highways.

In consequence, Chairman Roberts opened the hearings with the following significant remarks:

Before commencing with our witnesses this morning, I would like to commend the American Automobile Manufacturers Association for the resolution which the Board of Directors adopted last week, on June 6, recommending that none of its members

participate in automobile racing events, and that its members cease promoting speed and horsepower in advertising.

I would like also to state that I feel the Subcommittee on Traffic Safety has been very important in persuading the A.A.M.A. to stress safety, and I now look forward to industry talking horsesense instead of horsepower to the great intelligent American public in whom we all place our faith. Without objection we will include the resolution at this point in the record.

In view of later events, Roberts showed rare wisdom in reading this resolution into the permanent record. For by 1961 the horsepower race was on again (as will be noted later). Because of the powerful influence which the auto makers exercise on American education, the resolution is reprinted here in full.

#### A RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, The Automobile Manufacturers Association and the members of this board of directors share the public interest in increasing the safety of highway travel; and

WHEREAS, The manufacturers of automobiles have directed their efforts for many years toward developing and maintaining the performance characteristics of vehicles at levels consistent with highway conditions and the requirements of the using public, utilizing research and testing facilities, laboratories and engineering proving grounds to conduct tests under controlled and scientific conditions and standards, and can best serve the public by continuing these efforts; and

WHEREAS, The Automobile Manufacturers Association believes that the automobile manufacturers should encourage owners and drivers to evaluate passenger cars in terms of useful power and ability to provide safe, reliable, and comfortable transportation, rather than in terms of capacity for speed.

*Now therefore*, This Board unanimously recommends to the member companies engaged in the manufacture and sale of passenger cars and station wagons that they—

(1) Not participate or engage in any public contest, competitive event, or test of passenger cars involving or suggesting racing or speed, including acceleration tests, or encourage or assist employees, dealers, or others, or furnish financial, engineering, manufacturing, advertising, or public relations assistance, or supply "pace cars" or "official cars," in connection with any such contest, event, or test directly or indirectly;



(2) Not participate or engage in, or encourage or assist employees, dealers, or others to engage in, the advertising or publicizing of: (a) Any race or speed contest, test, or competitive event involving or suggesting speed, whether public or private, involving passenger cars, or the results thereof; or (b) the actual or comparative capabilities of passenger cars for speed, or the specific engine size, torque, horsepower, or ability to accelerate or perform, in any contest that suggests speed.

Except for this brief digression by Chairman Roberts into the question of the responsibility of auto makers for highway tragedy, the tone of the hearings is consistent: driver education, the safety soul-set, is assumed by all witnesses to be the principal means of bringing accidents to their irreducible minimum by making youth virtuous. This idea had so firmly established itself by 1957 that no direct challenge was made to it either by a congressman or any witness. The question in debate, therefore, was not whether the "educated" driver is really safe but whether the costs of "educating" him can be reduced and whether the proposed annual subsidy of \$28,000,000 would be well used.

The hearings opened with the testimony of Stanley F. Withe, secretary, Aetna Casualty and Surety Company, and of Paul B. Cullen, superintendent, Public Education Department, of the same insurance company. Both men witnessed to the "savings" that would accrue to the public if school boards everywhere would purchase the Aetna Drivotrainer, a classroom of imitation cars which the youngsters drive while watching movies un-reel a road. Two hours of indoor practice on these machines was thought to be equal to one hour of practice on the highway. Hence, one teacher could instruct a large number simultaneously and thus much money would be "saved" by the school board.

The double-barreled aspect of this testimony is not self-evident. If the Drivotrainer were to become a fixture in the driver-education program, if 1,000 high schools were to install it annually, if it cost \$18,000 per fifteen-place installation, \$18,000,000 of annual business was in sight with a steady business in spare parts, repairs, inspections, and films so long as "educating" the driver remained a principal feature of the high school curriculum. Certain auxiliary commercial advantages would also accrue. All high school students would receive a



favorable corporate image as the name "Aetna" repeated itself on the machine and on the films. This aspect of the matter received no attention. Everybody seemed to assume only that large "savings" would result if a few million dollars were spent in purchasing Aetna Drivotrainers.

The testimony of Paul B. Cullen, superintendent, Public Education Department, Aetna Insurance Company, illustrates the marriage of commerce and life-adjustment education. Cullen testified that, as superintendent of Aetna's Public Education Department, he inspected Drivotrainer installations around the country and found much enthusiastic support for its use. Into the record of the hearings (pp. 37-40) he entered a collection of letters from various teachers, all praising the Drivotrainer. Each teacher opens the letter to the superintendent of public education with the salutation "Dear Paul."

On p. 40, Cullen testified, "We have established a Drivotrainer curriculum advisory committee consisting of leading safety educators from all sections of the country, and this summer (1957) upon the Committee's recommendations, we will produce three new Drivotrainer films—*Driving on Expressways*, *Driving on Rural Highways*, *Driving on One-Way Streets*. As Mr. Withe said, and as you gentlemen [the congressmen on the committee] have indicated by your actions, highway safety is everybody's business. *We hope we are doing our part.*" (Emphasis added.)

At this point in the hearings a critic might have interjected, "Highway safety is, indeed, everybody's business, but some people make more money at it than others." In 1961 Aetna used full-page advertisements picturing its Drivotrainer Curriculum Advisory Committee in consultation over the merits and demerits of some film. In the advertisements for the Drivotrainer, Aetna proclaims that it has sponsored the machine as "a public service." The profits from the sale of the machine go to the company which manufactures it. Thus the impression given to the public is that Aetna is engaged in a charitable philanthropic enterprise. "We hope we are doing our part."

Under persistent cross-questioning (p. 44) by Congressman Paul F. Schenck of Ohio, Cullen finally stated the standard philosophy of the safety soul-set:

MR. SCHENCK: And you feel that the high accident rate of teenagers is a lack of mature judgment?

MR. CULLEN: I think it is that, sir, but I would like to pin it back a little more specifically to the fact that I think it is a lack of inculcating in the student the attitude, the proper attitude, for good driving. The statement is very frequently made "as you think, so you drive." If a person is going to use a car as an expression of his ego, the chances are he is going to be a rather poor driver. I think that if you can catch the youngsters in their formative years and inculcate an attitude of safety, I believe then you will go a long way toward licking this traffic-safety problem.

You see, most of us have just picked up what we know about driving. Very few of us have had formal courses. I think as Mr. Withe pointed out, if driver education and training [*sic*] was universal throughout the country, we could put on our highways, I believe it is, 1,750,000 trained drivers a year. Multiply that by 10 or 20 and think of the effect it would have, say, having 20 million drivers on our highways trained in safety.

MR. SCHENK: You are indicating psychologically, then, that the frustrated feeling . . . of someone who is trying to express himself through his driving attitudes and ability is causing many accidents?

MR. CULLEN: That is right, sir. If we could just get over the fact to the youngsters that it is not an adult thing to express themselves that way, through the driving of a car, that they should be self-controlled—and I think that most youngsters want to be adult, they want to be grown up—if we could get that simple point over to them, I think we would make a lot of progress.

Congressman J. Carleton Loser of Tennessee (p. 45) expressed his thanks to the Aetna witnesses as follows: "I think it is a very fine thing that a great insurance company would engage in an effort of this kind. I want to express my appreciation to the Aetna Insurance Company for the very substantial contribution it is making to traffic safety, and, of course, the very fine statements that both of you gentlemen have made reflect the great service you are rendering to your company as well as to the nation."

The testimony of Aetna's two spokesmen is marked by the strange omission of any factual statement on (1) the accident-reduction power of driver education in actuarial terms and (2) the presence of "inherent bias." This "bias" is an insurance term—females have an "inherent bias" toward fewer accidents than their male equivalents. Hence no excess premium charge is levied against the girls. Boys who elect driver education are supposed to have an "inherent bias" toward fewer accidents. Hence this particular group is given a 10 per cent reduction in the excess premium levied against all boy drivers, an excess premium which all males must pay to age 25. When Congressman Schenck quizzed Withe (*Hearings*, p. 43) on this important matter, Withe offered no actuarial figures, nor did he mention the insurance doctrine of "inherent bias." Neither did he offer any explanation of why Aetna gives only a 10 per cent reduction in extra charge for an alleged 50 per cent reduction in number of accidents. This was Aetna's golden opportunity to prove to the nation that the "educated" boy and girl have half as many accidents as the "uneducated" ones. Instead, the nation was left with only the vague impression that Drivotrainers installed in every high school would save millions of dollars because fewer teachers could teach more children by using this machine.

The next witness to be called was Anthony H. Ellison, traffic safety officer of the Department of Vehicles and Traffic for the District of Columbia. He pointed out the ambiguity arising from the false use as synonyms of the two terms "driver training" and "driver education." He testified (p. 49) against the misuse of the terms in the wording of the bill itself.

While it is not too important whether we use the terms *Driver Training* or *Driver Education* in referring to the approved high-school course, it is of extreme importance to understand that there is a world of difference between this course and the driver training course which is given in commercial driving schools.

I am convinced that there would be even greater support for the public-school course if this distinction were more clearly understood. I, of course, have no quarrel with the commercial driving course, which generally does an excellent job in attaining its goal. That goal is to teach the minimum physical skills re-

quired to operate a motor vehicle sufficiently well to qualify for the driver's permit. We know the commercial driving schools achieve this goal, since their customers are almost guaranteed that they will pass the permit examination after 7 or 8 hours of training.

The driver education course offered by our public schools, on the other hand, is of an incomparably higher order. Its principal objective is entirely different. It aims at developing in the young person those attitudes [the safety soul-set] which will permit him to operate a motor vehicle *in all safety to himself and to others for the remainder of his life*. Like the commercial course, it also attempts to teach the minimum basic skills needed for the mechanical operation of a motor vehicle, but the teaching of these skills is basically a method of putting into practice in a realistic learning situation, under professional [life-adjustment] guidance, those principles and attitudes which are taught in the classroom [*Italics added.*]

Clearly and eloquently, Ellison proceeded to restate Albert Whitney's Philosophy of Safety. People with good attitudes are safe; people with bad attitudes are unsafe. He concluded his testimony with the assertion that driver education is an academic subject and that "we do not need to defend" it "by way of questionable statistical research projects based on motor vehicle records." His position (and he states it well) is that this course has intrinsic merit, moral excellence, and "should be offered to every student in every high school throughout the land."

In commending Ellison for his testimony (p. 54) Congressman Samuel N. Friedel of Maryland voiced the popular sentiment that the medicine for curing the social disease of highway death and injury is driver education. He echoed the sentiment that "85 to 90 per cent of all accidents are due to the human element. That is where I think Driver Education fits into the pattern. It might be able to hold down the terrific death rate from traffic accidents that we have on the streets and highways today. I am 100 per cent in favor of driver education."

The hearings resumed on Monday, June 17, with witness Burton W. Marsh, director, Traffic Engineering and Safety Department, American Automobile Association. He first eulogized the propaganda for driver education that the A.A.A. had long promoted, praised the A.A.A.'s popular textbook *Sportsmanlike*



*Driving*, boosted the Auto-Trainer machine which the A.A.A. also sells, and repeated the assertion that many studies show that youthful drivers who have had the high school course "have only 50 per cent as many accidents as youths without such courses" (pp. 57-67).

When Chairman Roberts challenged Marsh on the proof for this 50 per cent figure, Marsh cited the A.A.A. propaganda booklet *Driver Education Proves Its Worth*, and presented copies of it to each member of the subcommittee. On Marsh's request, it was entered as testimony. It is reprinted in full, pp. 67-82 of the *Hearings*. Marsh had no statistical evidence to offer beyond this advertisement.

The next witness had helped invent the Auto-Trainer, which the A.A.A. sells at \$700 a unit. He testified (pp. 96-104) to the immense "savings" which would result if it were used in all schools. "There should be a trainer for every student in the class" (*Hearings*, p. 98). During the discussion that followed this testimony, much was made of the alleged fact that high school students were giving the safety soul-set to their parents, thus effecting a further accident reduction.

On Monday, June 24, the hearings were concluded with the testimony (pp. 105-18) of Dr. Norman Key, secretary, National Commission on Safety Education of the National Education Association. Dr. Key represented not only the life-adjustment educators but also the auto makers, inasmuch as his commission is subsidized by a grant from the Automotive Safety Foundation, and this foundation is subsidized by General Motors, Chrysler, Ford, etc. Naturally, his testimony was for the bill. But he recommended, in the name of the National Education Association, that certain provisions in the bill be changed. The most important of the recommended changes deals with Section 7 (b), which reads thus: "Not more than 5 per centum of the amount appropriated in any year for each of the purposes specified in Section 4 (a) shall be used for the purchase or acquisition of equipment." In popular language, this means that the \$28,000,000 was not to be used for the purchase of autos. Ninety-five per cent of the money was earmarked for teachers' salaries and improved teaching programs. Five per cent would buy textbooks, audio-visual equipment and supplies, but would



not buy annually the latest model cars for road practice. In effect, the bill said: "Salaries, yes; cars, no."

The National Education Association (p. 108) took the reverse position: Salaries, no; autos, yes.

First we [The National Education Association] would raise the question whether Federal financing of the salaries of a special group of teachers is a good long-range public education policy. The effect would be one of splintering, or fractionating, professional groups. Concomitantly we can foresee attendant administrative controversies arising from a confusion of responsibilities in terms of Federal, State, and local levels of programs.

In the second place, our experience—and it is one constantly reinforced through our active association with driver-education teachers and program administrators—is that the equipment item is the greatest single financial obstacle to the expansion of the program. To be more specific, most local school units, operating under programs of State subventions, find that financing and staffing the classroom part of driver education is far less of a problem than that of procuring, maintaining, operating, and insuring motor vehicles. Even in the case of cooperative programs wherein dealers furnish cars, the cost of operation and additional needed equipment are considerable. Further, there is increasing evidence that *such arrangements are resulting in a mounting financial burden to those dealers*. And, in addition, the administration of a cooperative car program often encounters delays in procurement which work to the disadvantage of the educational program. [Italics added.]

In the next paragraph Dr. Key explained how the dealers had refused cars to schools until the new models came out late in the fall. (The dealers want the boys and girls trained in the latest model cars because, one may suppose, it would be bad advertising to let them practice in an almost obsolescent vehicle that is just going out of the yearly style.) "Thus, we [The National Education Association] recommend," Dr. Key continued, "the designation of the major part of the appropriation particularly as a subsidy for driver education cars and other necessary instructional equipment. We further recommend that payment of teacher salaries be left to the States." Cars, yes. Salaries, no.

As may well be imagined, the attempt of the National Education Association lobby to rewrite the bill did not sit well with

the committee. Congressman Schenck of Ohio spoke up: "I appreciate hearing this testimony also, and the questions I am about to ask may seem very critical of the National Education Association, but I would like to remind you that some years ago I was a teacher and a member of NEA. I have not come to a final conclusion as to my exact feelings on this bill either, but, first, it would seem to me that NEA is setting itself up here, by its section-by-section suggestion, as an authority on how to frame legislation rather than expressing the interest of NEA in the legislation." The exchange of sentiments between Congressman Schenck and the N.E.A. lobbyist failed to bring out the fact that the N.E.A. is interested in consumer education through the subsidy it receives from the Automotive Safety Foundation. It was only natural that Dr. Key would be interested in the "equipment" problem just as Marsh was interested in the Auto-Trainer machine promoted by the American Automobile Association and as Withe and Cullen were interested in the Drivo-trainer machine sponsored by the Aetna Insurance Company.

Although the bill never became law, the published *Hearings* on it in June, 1957, represent the high tide of the life-adjustment propaganda for using the auto as the instrument for making girls and boys virtuous, responsible, mature consumers and for bringing down by one-half the number of traffic deaths and injuries. When Russia put up Sputnik I in October, the nation began slowly to take a closer look at its educational system and to ask whether consumer education was not doing a better job of exploiting youth than of giving it a substantial discipline in solid subjects.

## CHAPTER XI

### *A Reply to "Driver Education, The Case for Life"*

By 1958 the volume of criticism in the public press had become so constant, so caustic, and so popular that the life-adjustment professional educator began to take notice. The propaganda victory scored by Russia when Sputnik I went into orbit jolted the complacency of those who still harbored the illusion that a "backward" nation like Russia could not compete in natural science and technology with a "progressive" nation like the United States. As people looked at the Russian educational experiment, they saw that the Russians took education seriously, honored it everywhere, set high standards, and were steadfast in the pursuit of intellectual excellence, particularly in the study of foreign languages. They were putting special emphasis on English so that, when the time came for them to take over English-speaking colonies and nations, they could do so easily without creating unnecessary friction with the "natives."

For many U.S. citizens it seemed that time was running out and that we could no longer assume that our luxurious mode of life was as secure as we once thought. Push-button warfare committed us internationally, and there was no escape hatch for anybody. More citizens began to take a livelier interest in their public schools; the need for intensive scrutiny became self-evident to many. When a backward people begins to outshoot a forward people, the world takes note; and many said that we also should take a look-see.

What was seen, if the popular press is to be credited, was a school system saturated in many localities and regions by life-adjustment theory and operated by life-adjustment educators. The major emphasis was on conditioning children to behave according to some preconceived pattern. The project method and group dynamics, begun in or about 1915, were in full operat-

ing control. The largest project, driver education, which by group dynamics was to infuse the safety soul-set, was not only the biggest single project in terms of hours but also the most expensive in terms of dollars. States which could not afford to build enough classrooms for teaching chemistry and physics had levied special taxes for this vast project. It was but natural that when the public began to scrutinize the curriculum and to ask that the life adjusters should wring out some of the water, the life adjusters should reply, "There is no water. Our courses are solid academic courses, superior to the courses which they displace."

Throughout the country the life adjusters prior to 1958 were so powerfully ensconced in state teachers colleges, in state departments of public instruction, in the United States Office of Education, and in the National Education Association, as well as in numerous other organizations, that they normally crushed criticism by ignoring it. They controlled the propaganda that made the most noise, and they thought that the silent treatment would silence most criticism. But by 1958 the rising volume of popular public criticism reached a point at which they judged that the attack on frills could no longer be ignored, that the silent treatment no longer sufficed.

One major point of attack on them was the skill-thrill-frill criticism of driver education as teaching a skill that gave the thrill of greater adventures to teenagers who loved lacy frill courses because they were easy, full of fun, and helped them get the keys to Pop's car. This attack appears to have touched a raw nerve in many a life adjuster. The silent treatment of critics was torture, it seems, and so that method of silencing criticism was abandoned.

Among the many apologies, defenses, rebuttals that emerged, the most authoritative has the title "Driver Education, The Case for Life." It was written by Virgil M. Rogers, Ed.D. (Columbia Teachers College), dean of the School of Education at Syracuse University. Dean Rogers was chairman in 1958 of the Board of Judges of the Annual National High School Driver Education Award Committee. To this Board of Judges ample reference has been made earlier. Collaborating with Dean Rogers in issuing the pronunciamento was Dr. Walter A. Cutter,



director of the Center of Safety Education, Division of General Studies, New York University. Director Cutter was chairman of the Driver Education Committee, Citizens Council on Traffic Safety, State of New York. The reader will recall that this is the center which Whitney founded in 1938. The manifesto was first published in *The American School Board Journal* for October, 1958, and thus reached school boards in every state. It was likewise printed in *Traffic News and Views*, January, 1959, by the Association of Casualty and Insurance Companies, and the association gave it wide, free, continuous distribution as a public service. Thus it carries the combined authority of two big names in driver education plus the propaganda weight of the association.

Since no reply to this "Case for Life" has been written, a running commentary in footnotes has been added so that the citizen-reader can immediately perceive the position of the citizen-writer. Had some other citizen prepared a reply so that both sides of the "case" could be seen in parallel, the two would have been printed here side by side. But as things stand, the running commentary will have to suffice.

*Driver Education, The Case for Life*<sup>1</sup>

BY

Drs. Virgil M. Rogers and Walter A. Cutter

IN the 25 years from 1932 to 1956, almost 2,500,000 people in this country lost their lives as a result of accidents, and about 250,000,000 people suffered disabling injuries. The total costs of accidents for this period is roughly estimated at \$150,000,000,000.

In the school age bracket, accidents caused more deaths than any single disease which affects this age group. Detailed statistics along these lines are matters of ample record. They define a desperate national problem.

It is in the face of this tragic record that recent attacks

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<sup>1</sup> Reprinted from *The American School Board Journal*, October, 1958, by permission of the Bruce Publishing Company, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

The title carries the emotional connotation that those who are for us want "life" and that those who are against us want "death."

on some aspects of safety education, notably driver education, must be viewed. Constructive criticisms<sup>2</sup> of our educational system are always in order. There is undoubted truth in the charge that over the years, some courses have been admitted to the curriculum which may not demand rigorous scholastic effort.<sup>3</sup> We should be careful, however, in the somewhat frenzied<sup>4</sup> activities, opinions, and prophecies which have been set in motion by the Soviet Curriculum Committee,<sup>5</sup> not to throw the baby out with the bath water.

### *Safety Education*<sup>6</sup>

What is safety education? What is driver education? How did they ever get into the curriculum of more than 10,000 high schools, with more schools including this instruction every year?

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<sup>2</sup> When a life adjuster ends the silent treatment of some critic of his theory and proceeds to attack him in print, he normally charges his opponent with being a destructive critic. The normal way to begin is by use of this device: "We welcome constructive criticism but we are opposed to the destructive type."

<sup>3</sup> "Rigorous scholastic effort." Later in the essay Rogers and Cutter assert that driver education has rigorous scholastic standards. The testimony of the children who take the course is that it is an easy course, a "gut," to use their slang term. But the most convincing testimony is from the driver educators themselves. The course can be given, they say, to mentally retarded children (the morons) without any sacrifice of standards. If this is true, then the standard must have been very low to begin with.

<sup>4</sup> "Frenzied." It is customary in writing propaganda to charge that your critic is unbalanced, mentally unstable, "somewhat frenzied."

<sup>5</sup> "Soviet Curriculum Committee." Because of the unpopularity of the Russians, propagandists suggest that their critics are unpatriotic and treasonable. Although Rogers and Cutter do not list the names of those who sit on this mythical committee, others list Dr. James Conant, former president of Harvard; Admiral Hyman Rickover of the U.S. Navy; Dr. Arthur Bestor, a professor of history at the University of Illinois; the former president of the University of Chicago, Robert M. Hutchins; the former governor of Illinois, Adlai Stevenson. Miss Inez Robb, columnist for the New York *World-Telegram and Sun*, and Stevenson are the only two critics to be specifically named later on in the essay.

<sup>6</sup> The term "safety education" is one of the wonderfully loose terms used by life adjusters. A little later the term is defined as the "science of staying alive." This phrase also is loose. The term "the science of safety" is the clearest expression of the thought. The words "safety education" are confusing; for if some subject is a science it is clearly not an education.

What does driver education include? What are its values? Does it merit a place in the educational system?

Basically, safety education is the "science of staying alive." It is associated with no particular "school" of education, classical, functional, vocational or progressive.<sup>7</sup> It is devoted solely<sup>8</sup> to the development of knowledge, the attitudes of mind, the necessary skills which will keep people alive; which will prevent painful and frequently lifelong injuries, with their personal and social dislocations; which will decrease costly material waste.

With nearly 100,000 persons killed and injured each year, and a monetary loss estimated at 10.7 billions of dollars, have we a problem sufficient for our educational system to tackle? <sup>9</sup>

It is quite possible that we may underrate the total job of safety education. In the world of everyday experience, we face increasing hazards on every side. Many of these hazards are built in. Since they cannot be eliminated, they must be controlled. Therefore we have the total job of conditioning our whole population to this hazardous environment.<sup>10</sup> That is the work of all the disciplines included in safety education.

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<sup>7</sup> The statement here is untrue. Life adjusters like Rogers and Cutter are not conscious of belonging to a school. In terms of false utterance, they are therefore innocent. But the rest of the essay constitutes the evidence that they are 100 per cent life adjusters because they talk and think exactly as life adjusters talk and think. The probable reason why they do not realize what "school" they belong to is that they have been reared in a life-adjustment atmosphere and so speak the language and think the thoughts automatically. In other words, they may be typical products of the life-adjustment conditioning process.

<sup>8</sup> "Devoted solely." If driver education is "devoted solely" to the science of safety, why is it a branch of consumer education? When the class discusses the best gasoline to buy in terms of mileage, cost per gallon, and engine wear, the relationship to safety is not clearly visible. Or is a car being bought on the installment plan "safer" than one purchased for cash?

<sup>9</sup> In this rhetorical question resides another popular propaganda device that derails the mind of the reader. The real question is evaded by asking an unreal one. The real question is not whether we have accidents but whether we have a science for ending them. If the science has been discovered, it obviously should be taught.

<sup>10</sup> Such a sentence as this could only have been written by a confirmed life adjuster. No educator who does not belong to this special "school" would dream of saying that his job is "the total job of conditioning the whole population."



Is not the total job of our educational system to teach students both how to learn and how to live? Can we defend any system of education, in this modern world, which strives for the development of the mind and ignores the welfare of the body in which the mind functions? <sup>11</sup> We defend, in fact we now take for granted, the place of health education and physical development in our schools, and properly so. Are not accidents a social disease? <sup>12</sup> To the age of 25 years, they are the leading cause of death, while, between 25 and 45 years, they are second only to heart disease as a cause of death.

Have the schools a responsibility to this human erosion? <sup>13</sup>

### *Driver Education*

Because driver education is the most easily recognized area of safety education and because its purposes are often misunderstood, we have chosen it for special discussion.

The simple answer, usually given by the uncritical, is that driver education is designed to teach people how to drive. This is true but inadequate. A commercial driving school teaches people how to drive, although in many cases this instruction is inadequate to the development of even the basic skills.

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<sup>11</sup> Another propaganda trick is that of setting up straw men, then blowing them down. Here the propagandists imply that the destructive critics on the Soviet Curriculum Committee "ignore the welfare of the body." The fact that a critic stands for a higher degree of intellectual health does not imply that he is also for a low degree of physical health. The technical term for this rhetorical trick is "false dichotomy."

<sup>12</sup> This question is again a false one. Unavoidable or genuine accidents are not to be described by the term "social disease." This type of accident is one of the things that flesh is heir to. Accidents do happen frequently and are unavoidable. The social-disease type of accident, the type which arises out of choosing to do risky things—auto racing, for example—is clearly another type of accident. Our authors lump both types.

<sup>13</sup> The answer to this question is the obvious "Yes." But there is a world of difference between having a responsibility for accidents and a 100 per cent responsibility. A little earlier the authors asserted that the life adjusters had a 100 per cent responsibility for "conditioning the whole population" against accidents. Of course, everybody shares the common responsibility for being as careful as he can be not to hurt others. The schools have always assumed that they shared in the responsibility. Only a confirmed life adjuster insists on total responsibility.



It is the purpose of driver education to place trained and responsible drivers in our motor vehicles so that they will be able to act the part of mature citizens in the midst of one of the most striking social phenomena in history, a nation literally on wheels. What may have begun in some schools years ago as an interesting sideline has now become training for survival.

In 1951, after 50 years of motor vehicle operation, the country reached 1,000,000 traffic fatalities. At our present rate it is estimated that we shall destroy the next million in 27 years. More vehicles, more drivers, more deaths, more injuries, more property damage.

Is it the catastrophic nature of deaths from atomic weapons which fascinates us, and attracts our national interest and concern, whereas the steady depletion of our human and material resources leaves us unmoved and unconcerned?<sup>14</sup>

What we can or cannot do about controlling atomic weapons remains to be seen. It would compound that possible tragedy, if, while awaiting some uncertain future Armageddon, we did not use our intelligence and national determination to save the lives that we can save now. Traffic accidents, like other accidents, are no respecters of persons. Scientists, skilled workers, teachers, laborers, promising youths, helpless children are all numbered among the victims.

Certainly any well-founded discipline, utilizing an established and substantial body of teaching material which results in the safe enjoyment of our vehicles, plus the conservation of incalculably valuable human resources, merits a worthy place within the whole discipline of learning.<sup>15</sup>

It is commonly assumed by some public commentators on

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<sup>14</sup> "Unmoved and unconcerned." This is false rhetoric. No nation has been more moved and more concerned about its safety problem than the United States. We hold the world's safety record. The trouble appears to be that we have been *moved* too much; we appear to have emotionalized and sentimentalized safety so much that intelligent action (prudence) is paralyzed. Rogers and Cutter illustrate the paralyzing power of emotion and sentiment. This becomes more apparent as their emotions carry them forward.

<sup>15</sup> The thought here illustrates emotionalized wishful thinking. It also begs the question. The real questions are (1) whether driver education is a discipline, i.e., a science, (2) whether it is "well-founded," (3) whether "it results in the safe enjoyment of our vehicles."

curricula, what the schools ought to be doing, and how to "get back to fundamentals," that driver education has been propelled into our schools by a group of educational faddists. Once there, it is a highly dubious activity and should be eradicated forthwith. One such viewpoint, chosen for its profound irrelevance, is that of Inez Robb, who writes a syndicated newspaper column. In a column in the *New York World-Telegram and Sun* of January 16, 1958, she wrote: "In my flat-footed way I intimated that 'the first 12 grades of school are for something besides finger-painting, self-expression, folk dancing, life guidance, basket weaving, and other such sandbox activities as auto driving, lampshade making and cheer-leading.'" Further: "As an extracurricular activity, for which no credit is offered, this program is splendid. But it is boondoggling when it is offered as a credit course."

Is it boondoggling to save in the future some part of the 52,300 persons killed between 18 and 25 years during the years 1951-56? <sup>16</sup> This age bracket was chosen because many of these victims were just out of high school, and it appears that the schools among other community agencies and institutions had failed in many of these cases. Is it boondoggling to place our educational system in the forefront of the battle against this needless and irreparable loss?

Is it boondoggling that the only social institution which has shown either the capacity or the inclination to do something about a problem of this magnitude, is striving to do it? <sup>17</sup> Where are the other institutions and agencies capable and willing to

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<sup>16</sup> This is a foolish question. How do Rogers and Cutter expect to save "some part of the 52,300 persons killed" in 1951-56? Of course, they did not mean to assert that the life adjusters have the power of resurrecting the dead, but emotion did becloud logic, and so they said what they did not mean. The technical term used to label this type of error is Irish bull.

<sup>17</sup> Emotion alone could have led Rogers and Cutter to compose so false a statement. The National Safety Council is an enormous chartered social institution of great capacity and 100 per cent inclination "to do something." When to this social institution are added the eighty or more other powerful social institutions like the Automotive Safety Foundation and the fifty government safety institutions (motor vehicle departments) of the fifty states, one sees that driver education resembles a drop of water in the total safety bucket.

tackle it? <sup>18</sup> And isn't it true that right or wrong in its total offerings, the school is the agency most responsive to socially established needs and most adequate to meet them? <sup>19</sup>

Mr. Adlai Stevenson in a thoughtful article about education in *The New York Times Magazine*, April 6, 1958, entitled "The Dual Problem of Education," stated that he had taught his sons to drive and suggested that this function might be returned to the home. But, how many parents have the time, the patience, the skill, and the requisite qualities of good drivers themselves to do a satisfactory job? Remember, please, that we are not talking about simply starting, stopping, turning, or backing vehicles. We are discussing responsible driving. The school is the fountainhead for inculcating the principles and practices of personal and social responsibility. Here are our citizens of the future in their most impressionable years. Shall we deny them the right to life by failing to give responsible instruction in traffic safety, as well as general safety? <sup>20</sup>

#### *What Does Driver Education Include?*

Driver education strives to blend knowledge, skill, and constructive attitudes in such fashion that the student becomes a responsible driver and pedestrian.

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<sup>18</sup> The other institutions "capable" of handling the problem are local, state, and federal governments. The curious notion that the school is the only institution "capable and willing" to solve a problem of this complexity and magnitude is a notion which life adjusters believe in. Multitudes of American educators do not believe that the high schools should be held responsible for death on the highway any more than they should be held responsible for death in the air or for death on the railroads or for death in factories or in mines.

<sup>19</sup> The answer to this question is "No." One unquestionably established social need is for a religion that will inspire, elevate, ennoble everybody and bring peace to earth with good will toward all. As a nation we have accepted the principle that the safety problems of the body belong to the government and that the safety problems of the soul belong to the citizen and to the church of his choice.

<sup>20</sup> The life adjuster's concept that the school is the only place where a citizen can obtain *responsible* instruction in traffic safety is again a concept not shared by other educators. The idea that only a life adjuster can train youth to drive prudently is a notion carefully fostered and widely propagandized by the life adjusters. The public should know that this is not the view of the teaching profession and that in the main only life adjusters subscribe to it.

One wonders how many educational philosophers, analysts, and others who would dispose of driver education so summarily have ever seen a course outline or attended a well conducted class.

Here is the outline of major units in one of a number of textbooks available to driver education; it is on material of this quality and scope that courses in driver education are based.<sup>21</sup>

UNIT ONE: The Traffic Problem—A Challenge to Young Drivers.

PROBLEM 1: What is the traffic problem—and how are you concerned?

PROBLEM 2: How is the nation concerned?

PROBLEM 3: How did the problem develop?

UNIT TWO: Learning Fundamental Driving Skills.

PROBLEM 1: How can the instruments, switches, and controls help you?

PROBLEM 2: How is good form in driving developed?

UNIT THREE: The Driver.

PROBLEM 1: How does physical condition affect driving performance?

PROBLEM 2: How do personality traits affect driving performance?

UNIT FOUR: Understanding Your Car—Its Construction, Operation, and Maintenance.

PROBLEM 1: What makes a car go?

PROBLEM 2: How can you get your money's worth from your car?

UNIT FIVE: Traffic Laws—Natural and Man-made.

PROBLEM 1: How do the laws of motion and energy affect the car and the driver?

PROBLEM 2: What are the basic man-made traffic laws?

PROBLEM 3: How does engineering affect traffic and its laws?

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<sup>21</sup> The reader is asked to decide for himself whether the materials in the "science" outlined below have academic *quality*. There is no question about their *scope*. Is the textbook a genuine textbook outlining a genuine science, or is it a kind of anthology or miscellany about the general problem? Consider for example, Unit Four, Problem 2: "How can you get your money's worth from your car?" And then ask whether this is a question of life or death, survival or nonsurvival. Is it not possible that such discussions about getting one's money's worth illustrate what Inez Robb probably had in mind when she charged the life adjusters with academic boondoggling?



PROBLEM 4: What are the laws concerning licensing and liability?

PROBLEM 5: How are traffic laws enforced?

UNIT SIX: The Act of Driving.

PROBLEM 1: What are the problems involved in city driving?

PROBLEM 2: What are the problems involved in highway driving?

PROBLEM 3: What special problems are encountered on superhighways?

PROBLEM 4: What abilities are needed to meet driving emergencies successfully?

PROBLEM 5: What are the fundamentals of the act of good driving?

UNIT SEVEN: Co-operation Among Highway Users.

PROBLEM 1: How can drivers and pedestrians co-operate more effectively?

PROBLEM 2: What is the role of the cyclist in traffic?

UNIT EIGHT: Meeting the Challenge—It Can Be Done

These texts contain valid, essential content.<sup>22</sup> The whole driving act and the preparation necessary for it; the care and maintenance of vehicles; the knowledge of natural laws and regulatory statutes; the intimate relation of physical and mental states to safe driving; the supreme importance of disciplined attitudes; the ways in which the student can co-operate to achieve greater safety for all—these are among the subjects discussed.

There are numberless opportunities for material from almost every subject to be introduced in driver education, e.g., physics—friction, power, and electricity; chemistry—combustion; economics and mathematics—the economics of the automobile and the automobile industry; social studies—the effect of the automobile on population growth and development.

In the social sciences, there may be included the effect of the motor vehicle on, and its relation to, behavior patterns, population mobility, family life, industrial development, and, in the field of economics, the effect on transportation patterns, the

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<sup>22</sup> In studying the next four paragraphs the reader may well keep in mind the following question: How *essential* to actual safety on the highway is each item listed below? For example, when a child has been duly impressed (third paragraph) by the fact that "the motor vehicle is big business, economically and socially," does that knowledge enhance his safety on the road?

social costs of accidents, the economic significance in the manufacture, operation and servicing of motor vehicles. The economic aspect alone is of unusual importance, when it is realized that one out of every seven employed persons in the United States is associated in some fashion with the whole motor vehicle industry; manufacture, servicing, supply, and the thousands employed in state and municipal regulation and control.

The motor vehicle is big business, economically and socially.

Driver education is but one part of a larger program of safety education which has become a part of our educational program. There is the safety of the school itself, its varied activities, and its outside program and surroundings. Then there is instruction in home and fire safety, and in rural areas farm safety is added. These subjects, most of which are integrated with other subjects, are meaningful and effective, and have resulted in the school population showing a steady decline in accident experience over the years,<sup>23</sup> even though accidents still lead diseases for this group.

This total program moves toward the goal of teaching children and faculty how to be safe whatever they are doing. The goal? Safe individuals.<sup>24</sup>

### *Professional and Public Support*

As long ago as 1926, the Twenty-fifth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education was devoted to "The Present Status of Safety Education."

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<sup>23</sup> It is customary for the life adjusters to claim all the credit for accident reduction among elementary school children. The part played by good safety laws passed by local and state governments is not mentioned here. For example, the widely used law which requires all autos to stop when school buses are loading or unloading children is a wisely conceived law and is generally credited with having saved many lives and prevented many injuries. Citizens across the country protect children by observing this law. Much credit should also be given to the thousands of parents and other citizens who act as unpaid traffic officers at dangerous intersections when the school convenes or dismisses.

<sup>24</sup> The scientists tell us that there is actually no such thing as a safe driver or a safe individual. Every human being is a cluster of built-in risks, and the fortuitous operations of chance and luck mean that every human being has a greater or lesser number of accidents. The accurate term is *safer* individuals.

In 1940, a monumental landmark in the history of safety education, the 18th Yearbook of the American Association of School Administrators of the National Education Association was devoted entirely to safety education. Since then, innumerable texts, monographs, research studies and abstracts have been published, with more than 75 doctoral studies which deal with some aspect of safety education having been completed.

Among the more than 80 national organizations which have been and are actually interested in the field of safety education and have endorsed driver education are:

The American Association of School Administrators  
The National Commission on Safety Education, N.E.A.  
The American Automobile Association  
The President's Conferences on Highway Safety  
The National Safety Council  
Many other state and regional educational groups.

It is of interest to note that the chief state school officer of each of the 48 states has endorsed driver education.

The Association of Casualty and Surety Companies, as an example of an important industrial group, has, in addition to millions of dollars contributed to the cause of greater safety in the nation, taken a leading part for decades in supporting driver education in the schools.

A forthcoming publication of the National Commission on Safety Education will reveal a striking growth in the number of colleges and universities giving courses, and course programs, in the field of safety and driver education.

Are they boondoggling? <sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> The answer to this question is "Yes, a great deal of boondoggling goes on in these eighty national organizations." The question of safety is very perplexing, so much so that much time is spent in these organizations chewing the safety fat. The conference is said to be the most popular form of boondoggling since W.P.A., and these organizations "confer" all the time, i.e., almost every week of the year. If the citizen wishes to get a view of the prodigious amount of boondoggling that goes on, he is advised to read: *The Federal Role in Highway Safety*, House Document No. 93, 86th Congress. There he will find how these eighty organizations operate a boondoggling chaos, Parkinson's Law in action, bureaucracy triumphant.

*A Restatement of Values*

The vehicle has become the focal point of individual and familial interest, of social study and national concern. In the operation of the vehicle, the individual is extending himself, his speed, his movement, and his satisfaction of various desires and purposes. There is a distinctiveness about the relationship between the person and the vehicle which not only merits more study than has been given it, but which also distinguishes the importance which the individual attaches to the ownership and "right" to operate a vehicle from all his other possessions and his other "rights" and privileges.

In the operation of a vehicle, the driver is exercising a significant act of his citizenship. It is not only significant, but it is as dangerous an act as the average person ever performs. There are many aspects of citizenship which require no overt action. Driving requires the highest exercise of that part of good citizenship which deals with self-preservation and our responsibilities to our fellow citizens.<sup>26</sup> Driving is a dynamic act which can be filled with enjoyment of the privileges of our common citizenship or fraught with needless tragedy.

A man may fail to vote. If he fails, he is less than a good citizen. If he drives unsafely, for any reason, this misuse of his citizen's privileges endangers himself and others, and wastes property. It is of interest to note that more of our citizens exercise the driving privilege than exercise their right to vote.

Similarly, a boy or girl can "flunk" many subjects and live with reasonable happiness. If he or she "flunks" safety, all too frequently there is no opportunity for a makeup course. We, and he or she, have lost our most valuable resource, a life, or we have lost the potential contribution of a person often because of lifelong injury.

The values, therefore, which attach themselves most naturally to driver education come under the heading of the personal and social responsibilities of good citizenship. We educate the stu-

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<sup>26</sup> Many citizens will quarrel with this dogmatic statement. The highest exercise of that part of good citizenship which deals with our responsibilities to our fellow citizens is not good driving but insistence on impartial justice. A curious perversion of values appears to exist when good driving is elevated to a position superior to justice.



dent in these responsibilities, we aid him in developing socially constructive attitudes, we train him in the skills of the driving act. What has been for too many the casual and reckless exercise of the driving privilege, becomes for the driver education student the disciplined exercise of one of his most important responsibilities.

He gains knowledge of: mechanics; physics; chemistry; electricity; socially desirable behavior; laws and regulations; vehicles of different types, their capacities and limitations; the whole field of transportation and its social interactions.

He learns: The discipline of a trained and competent operation, or excellence; the effects of his mental states and physiologic conditions on his driving; the necessity of assuming responsibilities along with privileges; the requirements of group co-operation.

He gains: The satisfactions of the good citizen; the legitimate self-approval of the person who tries hard not to cause another person to suffer by reason of any ill-considered act; the prolonging of life for better adventures and accomplishments; in short the dividends of maturity.<sup>27</sup>

### *Conclusion*

Between 1951 and 1978, we shall lose in this country, from vehicle accidents alone, a million lives, unless the tide is turned.

Certainly the schools cannot do it all, but they can meet the needs of one of our important segments of the population, our young people. Schools can affect them while habits and attitudes are being formed. Schools can help to turn into the army of drivers, an increasing number of trained<sup>28</sup> drivers, driv-

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<sup>27</sup> "The dividends of maturity." To say to a fifteen-year-old boy or girl, "I'll make you mature in thirty-six lessons" is to promise what you cannot perform. This notion of the life adjusters that they have the power to make (in thirty-six lessons) men and women out of boys and girls is an unverified notion.

<sup>28</sup> In concluding, Rogers and Cutter extol the merits of driver training. Why they should shift from driver education to driver training in the conclusion without warning the reader is simply mysterious. It is indeed true to say, "Driver training frequently modifies the whole family's driving habits for the better," but the question is, Does driver education have any such effect? The technical term for shifting the center of the argument in the final paragraph is "the jerk-out of the rug of logic."

ers equipped not only to drive well themselves but to defend themselves more successfully against the actions of less responsible drivers. The schools, too, can be important centers of influence for community and parental safety. Driver training frequently modifies the whole family's driving habits for the better.

We insist, and properly so, on the licensing of drivers, but we had not made provision for drivers to learn how to become responsible drivers until the schools began to take on the task.<sup>29</sup>

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Thus blandly do Drs. Rogers and Cutter end their case for driver education.

When a college professor reads the glowing prospectuses sent by his college's department of public relations to the parents of prospective students, and when the professor notes the wonder-working power of the college as this power is seen from the lofty eminence of public relations, he has been known first to sigh, then to say, "It would indeed be wonderful if it were only true." The same sighful thought doubtless runs through the mind of many a driver educator who, by classroom contact with children, knows well that a whole academic curriculum cannot be mastered in thirty-six lessons despite what public relations experts may say as they gild the life-adjustment lily for the gratification of the public eye. Many serious educators hold that courses which have a smattering of everything in them create the "dissipated mind," cause intellectual regurgitation, and in consequence give rise to mental malnutrition. As one citizen to another, the author asks the reader to ask himself whether at age fifteen he could have mastered one-tenth of what Rogers and Cutter say a child "gains knowledge of," "learns," and "gains"—wisdom, safety, and virtue wrapped up in one package.

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<sup>29</sup> A favorite idea of the life adjusters is that the *only* way a person can become a responsible driver is by taking his high school course in driver education. Many responsible citizens believe that a good licensing system leads to the careful training of prospective drivers and is, in itself, both an excellent and a sufficient educational device.

## CHAPTER XII

### *Prospect and Retrospect: An Assessment*

AS A CITIZEN IN 1962 reviews the growth of consumer education and sees its powerful hold on the public curriculum, he recognizes at once the basic conflict involved. Is the American child to be exploited for the benefit of insurance, cars, and the auto clubs? The consumer educators have many powerful arguments on their side. The strongest of these is that the child must be taught to use his future leisure safely. Automation, we are told, will shortly in this decade bring the twenty-four-hour work week. Every week end will be a holiday week end. Instead of the unusually high killings of Memorial Day, the Fourth of July, and Labor Day, we will have them as regularly as Sunday rolls around. Four short days of six hours each and three long sixteen-hour days of recreation out of every seven is the expectation of the consumerites. And the children must be educated up to it so as to lead ample, well-rounded lives. "The problem of leisure" is said by the consumer educator to be the major social problem of our future. He foresees a tremendous increase in hunting, fishing, boating, motoring, dining, dancing, motelling, and organized sports. All these activities have their dangers, and the public schools are allegedly vested with the responsibility of making the new leisure safe and rich and full of the fun created by innumerable costly contrivances, of which the auto is just one. But some other questions ought to be answered first. Present realities create questions which press for present answers.

Why has the safety movement failed? Why do we list more killed and maimed by cars in 1961 than in 1936? The question cannot be fully answered, because of the complexity of the problem. But the citizen who reviews the history of the safety movement sees some of the causes for the failure, and it is the pur-

pose of this chapter to present the most prominent of them and to assess future prospects.

The basic first cause is that the movement has had only such leadership as commerce chooses to supply. The movement began with commerce, is presently controlled by commerce, and will in the future continue in commercial hands until the public acts in its own behalf. Commerce gives as much safety as is consistent with its own economic well-being. If a deadly device promotes sales, the auto makers install it. Thus engines that can propel pleasures cars at 140 m.p.h. and up were installed in 1962 models and the public was asked to buy them for that very reason. Again, in 1955, when Ford endeavored to promote safety by designing a safer car, the other companies refused to go along, and Ford's sensible attempt led to a financial loss.

In the use of a safety device, such as the seat belt, Ford alone sought to educate the public. When, as the result of Cornell's crash-injury research, it became known that safety belts would save thousands of lives annually, one would suppose that the whole safety movement would have united in a common front to make us all use belts as habitually as we use ignition keys. Instead, for some unknown reason, the auto industry (Ford excepted) turned thumbs down and went in for glistening fins. In the 1962 models the frame was so made that, if the customer insisted, seat belts could be swiftly installed as optional equipment at extra cost. The reason usually surmised for the refusal of Chrysler and General Motors to compete with Ford in the healthy production of life-preserving cars is that these companies feared that the public would grow timid and would buy fewer cars. Whatever the reason, the fact remains that seat belts from 1956 through 1962 were not made standard equipment, were not promoted by everybody within the safety movement, and were not featured in driver-education classes as a principal means of reducing the number of dead and maimed.

General Motors spent hundreds of thousands of dollars promoting driver education by a national advertising campaign with the slogan "The cars are *safer* . . . the roads are *safer* . . . the rest is up to *you*." The same money spent on seat belts as standard equipment would have produced tangible results and would have earned for General Motors a more genuine right



to say, "Our cars are safer." The average citizen is puzzled by such advertising, particularly when he reads testimony given to the Subcommittee on Traffic Safety of the House of Representatives. No car designer in the history of motormaking has been privileged to design a car safe from the ground up. Charm first; safety second. As much safety as is consistent with sales! Ford alone deviated once from this creed; but with that exception, the industry has preached safety to the citizen and practiced danger in design.

Unquestionably the primary responsibility for the production of cars so built as to package the occupants and reduce thereby the danger to life and to limb is the manufacturer's responsibility. The prudent citizen who wants to reduce the danger to himself and his family can find no model in any make designed from scratch to give him maximum protection. One would suppose that all car manufacturers would compete fiercely to see which one could make the safest and sturdiest car. One would suppose that each would have at least one model out of dozens to satisfy the prudent desires of foresighted citizens.

Instead of this, the average citizen is compelled to buy a dangerous car, one built on the principle of planned obsolescence—a car designed to convert itself within a decade or so into rust and oily rubble, as the ample auto cemeteries testify. Horses lived longer. According to a vice-president of General Motors the proper term for this design principle is "dynamic obsolescence." To offset the extreme danger involved in cars which wear and rust rapidly away, the safety movement promotes inspection campaigns so that, if the car is destroying itself more rapidly than its owner realizes, it may be repaired or interred at the expense not of the maker but of the citizen. The idea of a sturdy car with a long life expectancy is an idea which prudent consumers cherish in their dreams, but which the dynamic-obsolescencers abhor as the evil nightmare of unprogressive thrifty folk.

At the joyous beginning of the safety movement the nation was urged to have faith in business and industry, for there was supposed to be no problem which the combined wisdom of these two gigantic forces could not solve, once they made up their minds to solve it. Safety in general was the large problem, and

traffic safety the particular one. Yet the little problem of designing a car that maximized safety and minimized danger proved to be too large for the leadership. It must now be written off as one of Time's tiny ironies and the public must look elsewhere for prudent statesmanship.

So reluctant is industry to produce the less dangerous car that Congress has attempted to goad it into action. To achieve this end, many bills have been introduced; few or none have been passed. In the 1961 Congress two bills were presented: (1) The Bennett bill would require certain safety features in all cars. (2) The Roberts bill would give the government the right to buy cars on the basis of their sturdy safe design. This means that the federal government would have the right to reject low bids for the dangerous car and accept higher bids for the more safely built car. Thus, contracts for cars might be based not on price but on prudent design. The hope of the Congress was that this might encourage the makers to put safety first and charm second.

Because of the author's belief that the leadership within the auto industry had not accepted its share of responsibility for the 38,000 annual dead, he testified on March 28, 1961, at the public hearings of the House Subcommittee on Traffic Safety on the Bennett and Roberts bills (House Bills 903 and 1341) as follows. He included as part of his testimony the General Motors advertisement that is reproduced here, courtesy of General Motors.

The history of auto-making and auto advertising for the last six years illustrates the fact that the auto industry is incapable of legislating for itself laws which promote our common safety. Because of this historical fact and because the industry shows no inclination to change, federal legislation is needed.

In 1955 the horsepower race among our leading manufacturers led to a severe criticism of the practice of putting motors designed for racing cars into ordinary stock cars. At that time it was considered contrary to the public welfare on public highways to have cars which were capable of speeds above 90 m.p.h. On June 6, 1957, the leading manufacturers reached a gentlemen's agreement that they would cease to emphasize tremendous speed and enormous power and would call off the horsepower race so as to lessen the entirely human temptation to drive at

speeds 'way beyond what is reasonable and prudent for boys and girls, men and women.

In 1960, General Motors plastered the billboards across the nation advertising the Chevrolet as "Sixties Sizzler" and showed it streaking down a road. One of the 1961 Chryslers was announced in *Motor News* as having a motor which would propel it at 140 m.p.h. or better. This speed is almost that of the racing cars at the Indianapolis Speedway 500-mile Memorial Day Race. Such speeds sometimes kill even the expert drivers and sometimes the spectator also. The historical fact is that the gentlemen's agreement appears to have been broken. In ten years' time these 140 m.p.h. cars will be purchasable by teenagers at a hundred dollars or so. And when a teenager soups up one of them it will be a sizzler in the 70's. Present legislation has to consider future consequences. The car which the general rides in today may be the car which the child pilots ten years later. All racing cars should have bucket seats, safety harnesses, and the like not only for the present protection of important people but for the safety of the little people ten years hence. Our government owes it to the next generation to purchase only those cars in which the safety features are equal to the potential speed.

Another reason why the auto-makers must be encouraged to design and produce safer cars is their attitude, which appears to me to be hypocritical. In 1960 General Motors ran a series of very expensive full-page ads in many popular magazines with the head, "The cars are safer . . . the roads are safer . . . the rest is up to *you*." These advertisements are addressed to boys and girls. They may be obtained free for posting on bulletin boards in driver-education classrooms. As we all know, it is truer to say that in 1960 according to the statistics of the National Safety Council, The cars were 1% more dangerous . . . The roads were 1% more dangerous . . . and 1% more of us was killed in 1960 than in 1959. It appears to me to be hypocritical to be quietly putting more power under the hood while preaching the greater safety of the car.

A third reason is that the auto-makers have helped shift the responsibility for accidents from themselves to the public schools by promoting driver education. Cars are donated or loaned to schools by auto dealers. Having promoted teen-age driving and car ownership by this device, the auto-makers advertise that those who kill themselves are to blame. To the parents of the dead this may appear doubtful, especially to the parents who did not want their children encouraged to drive until they were out



The cars are *safer*...the roads are *safer*...



the rest is up to you!

Graduation day! You've waited a long time for this special event, haven't you? Because the diploma for which you've worked so hard opens doors to new adult responsibilities.

And, if you're using the family car today, remember your driver's license is a lot like that new diploma. It opens the door to new responsibilities, too. The obligation to drive carefully and courteously.

You'll have plenty of help: Automotive engineers conduct a never-ending search for ways to design and build better and safer cars. That's why modern automobiles give their

drivers a clear view of the road. They offer you better braking and easier steering. And today's new thoroughfares are designed to help you drive more safely, too.

But, from there on, you're on your own. It's up to you to carry out those responsibilities to your parents and to your friends—to yourself and to your community. When you do, you'll help to keep today the happiest of memories—as we sincerely hope it will be.

Congratulations and best wishes for a rewarding future from the people at General Motors.



This message, which will appear on the back cover of the May-June issue of "American Youth" magazine, is one of a series designed to make teen-agers aware of their responsibility behind the wheel. American Youth is sent by General Motors every other month to approximately one million newly-licensed teen-age drivers and includes at least one article on safe driving per issue.

A car is a big responsibility... so handle it with care! GENERAL MOTORS  
CHEVROLET • PONTIAC • OLDSMOBILE • BUICK • CADILLAC • ALL WITH BODY BY FISHER

*Reprinted by courtesy of General Motors*

One of the G.M. "The Cars Are Safer . . ." Ads

of high school and more mature. The auto industry spends millions putting children on the road age 14 and up through driver education. This is the most doubtful education we have. In 1956 in Michigan we made driver-education mandatory for the 16-18 age group; 100% of the potential group enrolled. In 1958 we Michiganders killed 1,334 of us; in 1959, we killed



1,440; in 1960, we killed 1,545.<sup>1</sup> These deadly statistics, which show a 16 per cent increase of 1960 over 1958, suggest first that the roads are no safer; second, that the cars are no safer; third, that driver education kills more than it preserves; and fourth, that the auto-makers ought not to promote driver education in the public schools but should assume their own share of responsibility for accidents. I think that bills like the Bennett bill and the Roberts bill will have a wholesome tendency to sober up the auto-makers and cause them to spend their money not on so questionable a thing as driver education but on so certain a life-saving device as the seat belt.

A second deterrent to the responsible development of a sound national safety program has been the influence of the leadership of organized tourism, the business for which the American Automobile Association is the chief spokesman and major propagandist. From such a national association of auto clubs one would expect a solid program for national road laws, nationally enforced for the health and safety of the average citizen who does drive more carefully (and hence more safely) on roads which he knows are well patrolled by expert patrolmen who spot and arrest tipsy or careless or reckless drivers. In the early days of motoring sporting drivers banded together to protect themselves against exploitation by cops and justices of the peace, who often arrested for revenue only. There was a need to protect the driver against legally protected injustice. That time has largely passed, and the need now is for doubled or tripled forces of state or national highway patrolmen operating out of specialized courts which dispense swiftly the kind of justice that breeds respect for the law and thus "educates" those citizens who learn the hard way. There is a high degree of probability that one patrol car does more to alert the motorist than does the prayer of those who rely on their Safety Soul-Sets and who pray:

O Lord!

Help me to zig when I should zig,  
And to zag when I should zag.

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<sup>1</sup> I have been informed by Lynn M. Bartlett, superintendent of Michigan's Department of Public Instruction, that these figures (according to Michigan State Police records) should read: 1,382 killed in 1958; 1,467 in 1959, and 1,596 in 1960. The increase is therefore nearer 15.5 per cent than 16 per cent.



*Reprinted by courtesy of General Motors*

### The High School Driving Range at Flint, Michigan

The American Automobile Association still seems to labor under the impression that hick cops are pursuing innocent drivers, that the roads are sports arenas, that sportsmanlike driving is good driving, that motoring is a game played for fun, that we are still living in the days when cars were few, roads empty, and the long, long trail wound from vista to vista. To continue to foster the early notion that the car is still a vehicle for recreational romps on public highways, that it is still to be regarded as a gorgeous toy, is to reflect an immaturity unbecoming the sedate leadership of a gigantic business. The great release that a driver used to feel as he relaxed behind the wheel is no longer possible in many areas. He is now ordinarily required to battle his unrelaxed way through congested streets not in sport but in earnest. The traffic officer and the highway patrolmen are, to the prudent driver, guardian angels, present help in time of





*Reprinted by courtesy of General Motors*

### The High School Driving Range at Flint, Michigan

trouble, aids in achieving the driver's one deep desire—to get off the road and out of the traffic.

According to a 1957 poll conducted by the Opinion Research Corporation for the Pure Oil Company and the American Trucking Association Foundation, Inc., 74 per cent of the adult citizens found little pleasure in driving; for them the days of happy careless motoring were over. But the same poll discovered that 84 per cent of the teenagers thought that “most people *do* enjoy driving.” The *Report* continues: “Teenagers love to drive and they freely admit it. They also admit they have pent-up feelings at being confined to speed-limits and roads. 91 per cent would like a special place to race their cars, and 64 per cent of adults,

surprisingly, agree. It's generally felt that drag-racing clubs, supervised by police, channel youngsters' automobile activities into something constructive." Students reared in high school on the American Automobile Association's popular textbook *Sportsmanlike Driving* may come to look at driving as a sport and at a road as a recreational area.

That 74 per cent of the adult citizens have discovered that the days when one could skylark on the highways are mostly over is a fact that the propaganda of the A.A.A. seems not to recognize. In the Courtesy Code taught to youth there is no mention of the discourtesy involved in aimlessly adding to the congestion of streets clogged with tired people struggling to get wherever they have to go. The time appears to be rapidly approaching when it will be considered the height of courtesy, patriotism, and civic virtue to stay off the road unless there is genuine need to be on it. And to perpetuate the outmoded idea that public highways are public playgrounds is to make a dangerous situation more dangerous. Bar-hopping on foot is a popular city sport full of mild risks and mild pleasures; bar-hopping on wheels is a popular highway sport full of sharp risks, tense pleasures, and awful penalties. According to one report, 30 per cent of the 38,000 who die annually have alcohol in their systems and thus die happy, with their shoes on as true sportsmen should, approved by the A.A.A.

The third deterrent to the development of a sound national traffic-safety program is the top leadership of the auto-insurance business. The citizen will search in vain either for voluntary agreements to make the cost of insurance match the risk, or for national insurance laws that require the same thing. Nor have we any laws that require the insured to pay personally for at least a part of the damage he may do. We have no research telling us how much added damage the complete-coverage clause in auto-insurance policies causes. For just as arson increases when it becomes profitable to burn a property, accidents may well increase under carelessness born of "complete coverage."

But the major failure is in cost of insurance. Everyone supposes that the rate corresponds to the risk. Why is it, then, that the more prudent drivers in the age group 25 to 55 are



penalized by higher insurance premiums for the excesses of the unmarried male in the age group 15 to 25? We are told that this younger group occasions an 80 per cent loss to the insurance business, and that the older, more prudent group must pay more, to give the insurance companies a profit; otherwise the charges to those who do more damage than they pay for would be "prohibitively high." Thus adolescents are given below-cost insurance and are thereby encouraged to take to the road. No character-building educational device is more effective than the device of punishment which fits the crime. If the risk really is prohibitively high, the cost should be such as to prohibit the risk and thereby end it. When the author asked an insurance agent why his company encouraged adolescent driving by charging a fantastically unreal low premium, he replied, "Oh, we make it up later on; he'll repay the loss later." Thus insurance sometimes operates on an enjoy-yourself-now, pay-later plan.

In addition to this, the citizen may be miffed when he finds himself paying higher premiums to defray the advertising costs of the driver-education campaigns which some auto insurers affluently wage. If insurance companies had backed a program of sound licensing practices, whereby a driver's license is hard to get and easy to lose, a program which insisted that a driver be well trained instead of loftily educated, a program which "educated" adolescents by making them pay fully for the damage they do, the probability is high that a real dent would have been made in the death toll. Instead of this we have insurance backing an opposite policy, the policy of driver education, whereby the adult license is easy to get and, once obtained, hard to lose.

The fourth deterrent is the failure of all branches of the safety movement to recognize that the automobile creates a national problem that demands national action. Today the driver passes from one legal jurisdiction to another to another in a matter of minutes or hours. Yet there are no national driving laws. Even the law requiring the use of the right-hand lane has no federal status. The National Safety Council, the body vested by Congress with the responsibility of national leadership in safety, backs no written program for national laws governing the judicious and prudent use of cars on federal highways throughout the country. Although the auto is almost as inter-

state as the airplane, and fully as interstate as the railroad, laws governing the prudent use of air and rail transportation are national, but those governing the use of private passenger cars are state, county, and city. The Balkanization of the American public highway system unquestionably promotes accidents. Within the federal government itself the conflicting interests of competing bureaus retard effective action and the development of national policy; planned chaos is the consequence.

The National Safety Council applauds federal action in creating a multi-billion-dollar interstate highway system without any provision for the appropriate patrolling of it. The proposal has been made in Michigan that 75 m.p.h. should be considered the safe upper speed on these roads. Other states are free to define safe speeds at lower or higher limits, as caprice determines. Thus programs of "Speed up and die" compete with programs of "Slow down and live," and there is no federal authority responsible for adjudicating the conflicting claims of each. One state may say that at 14 a boy is a safe driver, to be given an adult license provided he has received a safety soul-set as given by a state-sponsored driver-education course, and is prepared to romp safely at will on federal highways. Another state may set 18 as the earliest age at which a sufficient maturity may be attained for the state to take the risk of granting the lifetime license. Since the auto is as dangerous in one state as in another, and since the problem is no longer local but national and international, national laws governing the judicious use of national highways appear to be as much needed as national laws governing airways and railways. Yet the chartered leadership has no program, no propaganda for the establishment of national laws, nationally enforced. It sits back and waits for others to act. If a citizen requests from the National Safety Council its program of basic national laws governing the production of safe motor-cars and their prudent use, he will find that the National Safety Council does not know its own mind. It has no such program.

Critics who dispassionately assess the results of the safety movement in terms of that part of it which deals with public safety have come to the conclusion that the problem is much too big for private control, and that the conspicuous failures in Engineering, Enforcement, Education buttress this judgment. In

engineering the conspicuous failure is the private failure to accept the responsibility for designing cars that "package" the human occupants. Contrariwise, the conspicuous *success* in engineering is that of roads designed for the maximum safety of the human user. In enforcement the conspicuous successes are those in states which have come to look upon their roads as places where the citizen must work, not play, as places where the "sizzler in the sixties" is unsizzled in court. States and cities in which the driving license is hard to get and easy to lose because of the sound enforcement of prudent laws have lower accident rates. What is true of some states and cities should be true of the nation. It is possible that federal licenses granted only to well-trained drivers will some day be a prerequisite to the use of federal highways.

But the most conspicuous failure of public safety, privately controlled, is in education, where the initial mistake of the public-safety theorists has now come home to roost. That mistake was taking the principal responsibility for traffic safety out of the hands of enforcement and placing it in the hands of education, an error that appears to have lulled the public into a false sense of security. To forget that good laws justly and fully enforced have an educational power quite superior to that of the academic classroom is to forget that one night in jail is remembered long after thirty days in school have been forgotten. For states to transfer the licensing power from the law to the school (and this is virtually what has happened in some states) is to forget two points: (1) there is an enormous educational force in sound licensing laws well enforced, and (2) those who are called upon to administer and enforce the laws that govern the prudent use of public highways have a deep interest in seeing to it that the incompetent are kept off.

In Michigan, the licensing laws are weak, the educational laws strong, the death toll severe. Under this system, poorly trained drivers are often licensed because the licensing standards are low. Just how low they are is well illustrated by a bulletin published in the May, 1961, issue of *Safety Education*. It reads: "*Driver Education for the Exceptional Child* is a new course being offered this summer at Michigan State University. Thought to be the first in the country, this course will be re-



stricted to driver education teachers and teachers of mentally handicapped children in high school. It aims to provide teachers with the special skills and knowledge needed to teach students who have learning problems." Expressed in popular language this bulletin announces a course in How to Put the Feeble-minded Behind the Wheel. It is obvious that licensing laws that set their tests at the moron level are low-standard laws. With standards like these forced upon them, it is not to be wondered that state highway patrolmen grow cynical and say, as one said to the author: "The schools put them on the road; we pick up the pieces."

The traffic departments of most states are held responsible for public safety on public roads, yet the licensing authority is slowly passing out of their hands and into the hands of departments of public instruction. Where strong laws vest in the traffic department the full responsibility for putting drivers on the road, licenses are harder to get, for the department is compelled to live with its own mistakes—a situation that is as it should be. In Michigan the 16–18 age group, which the school system puts on the highway equipped with adults' licenses, is in large part the responsibility of the Department of Public Instruction, which has undertaken no campaign to raise licensing standards. One department of state government administers the safety soul-set; another department picks up the pieces.

If citizens are to exercise coherent and orderly control over the present incoherent disorder, certain large decisions must soon be made. The relatively uncontrolled use of private cars on public roads cannot continue forever. If the hope of the consumer educator is fulfilled and the number of private pleasure cars is doubled in the next twenty years, the so-called present "cancerous overgrowth of the motorcar" will become so enlarged as to be visible even to children with retarded minds as they drive retarded cars in a retarded civilization.

The citizen who wishes to assess judiciously the place of the motorcar in a wholesome, healthy society can do so by reading three books. The first is an appraisal, full of wit, humor, and satire, of how the motor industry exploits the citizen-consumer. It is *The Insolent Chariots*, by John Keats of Philadelphia. It first appeared in 1957 but is presently available in a Crest paperback



at thirty-five cents. Keats writes from the point of view of parents; and after reading his chapter on the state of economic peonage imposed upon children (or upon adults with childlike minds) by the buy-now, pay-later plan of purchasing cars, few parents will permit their progeny to indulge in this vicious practice.

The second book has special significance for the citizen because it takes the auto out of the American scene, presents it against the background of the older, more congested British civilization, and discusses the problem in its next larger context, the national one: C. D. Buchanan's *Mixed Blessing: The Motor in Britain* (1958). It is a "sober appraisal" of the merits and demerits of the car as it builds and as it destroys, as it creates ugliness as well as mobility, as it overpowers communities while at the same time it gives many access to the ocean. British failures and British successes in coping with the problem make this book an eye-opener to those who think of the social problems engendered by the car as those involving only traffic safety. Buchanan both discovers and demonstrates that the unlimited multiplication of cars degrades the civilized humane mode of life. The amenities which the car introduces are fewer than the evils which to date have come with it. As Buchanan expresses the matter in the first paragraph (p. 208) of his concluding chapter:

The purpose of this book has been to trace the development of the motor vehicle, to show how it has penetrated into the social and economic life of the country until it has come to hold a dominant position, and to discuss some of the problems in town and city to which it has given rise. On the credit side the motor can claim to have revolutionized our transport system with far-reaching consequences for industry and commerce, and it has found many important social uses amongst which an enormous widening of personal horizons must be placed high. On the debit side the new mobility spread by the motor has caused towns to sprawl in ugly confusion without real convenience or social cohesion, and there have been severe frictional by-products in the form of a terrible loss of life and limb and *continuous attrition of amenities of every kind*. The motor's contribution to our civilization is one which the author has felt justified in describing as a mixed blessing. There is no point now in lament-

ing its arrival, but if we are to control the machine in the future we must be clearly aware of both the good and the evil it can do. [Italics added.]

Just as Buchanan's book enlarges upon Keats', so Lewis Mumford's *The City in History* (1961) enlarges upon both of them. In it Mumford unrolls the history of the city from its prehistoric foundations to its present planned chaos. In terms of what cities have sometimes been—civic centers of humane, dynamic life—the citizen is made to see what our cities might be. According to Mumford, if a city is not a center for nourishing what is excellent in human life, it is no true city. And without true cities there are no centers of fully civilized existence. Cities so hostilely planned as to inspire in every civilized soul an intense desire to escape from their harshness are cities which must have lost touch with civilization—have lost the civic sense. When a city has retrogressed into a megalopolis, when it becomes a place from which men yearn to escape and to which they hate to return, a barbaric mode of life has crept in and civic virtue has departed. In the vitriolic phrase, "the cancerous overgrowth of the motorcar," Mumford epitomizes the evil involved in the thoughtless multiplication of machines that not only eat up the daily substance of many, not only kill and maim many, not only gut cities and make them empty shells, but also impoverish the urbane life. Mumford's thoughtful book is a must for every driver educator who aspires to know his subject.

The gigantic task of subduing the car, of reducing it from the state of master to that of servant, calls for a new type of statesmanship, a new teaching, a new kind of propaganda. The vision of the safety movement is too limited, its leadership too circumscribed, to meet this challenge. The part of the safety movement that incorporates the driver educators is presently powerless, because it is based on the false notions that there is no limit to the number of cars and that with a safety soul-set anyone from a moron up can drive safely.

The concluding chapter of the first edition of *Man and the Motor Car* (1936) is entitled "The Millennium." This chapter has since been deleted, perhaps because its author, Albert W. Whitney, foresaw the present, foresaw that the control of driver education by consumer educators would lead not to the prudent,

orderly, judicious use of cars but to their mere multiplication with the consequent increase in the evils they produce and a lessening of the goods they confer. In "The Millennium" Whitney wrote: "Driving will be viewed not as a right but as a privilege to be given, after the most rigorous and careful examination, only to those who have demonstrated that they are physically and mentally and morally and by training and aptitude capable of assuming such a responsibility. We shall find a considerable proportion of persons who will not have these qualifications." Had Whitney foreseen that his dream of licenses hard to get and easy to lose would, in the hands of consumer educators, become licenses easily got and with difficulty lost, he would doubtless never have written it. Had he foreseen that driver educators would exert themselves to discover ways of licensing the exceptional, feeble-minded child, he would doubtless have revised his estimate of the power of the high school to select from the many boys and girls those who meet his standards.

On May 31, 1961, the morning following the Memorial Day week end, the Detroit radio announced that we had set a new death record for Memorial Days dedicated to the honored dead of past wars. The present undeclared war of man against motorcar, deadly in many of its effects on both body and soul, is an insidious variety of cold war, for it operates like a hidden virus within the body politic. And at present so lethargic and so apathetic has this body become that it appears unable to rise boldly and take courageous action against the practice of putting fully licensed, half-trained children on our highways to play deadly games during their period of greatest imprudence. And so lethargic and apathetic has the mind of this great body become that, instead of developing national laws nationally enforced, it sleepily dreams of a day when our children or our children's children will all have safety soul-sets and the problem will have solved itself. The citizen has a right to hope that this nightmarish type of dream will not last forever, and the chilling warfare of Man versus Motorcar will subside as judiciously built cars driven by judiciously selected citizens traverse the country under a national code of judicious driving.





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